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An interview with Paul Gann

Buffoonery at the summit

John Hospers reviews *Gulag III*

Amnesty International

Enemy of the State?

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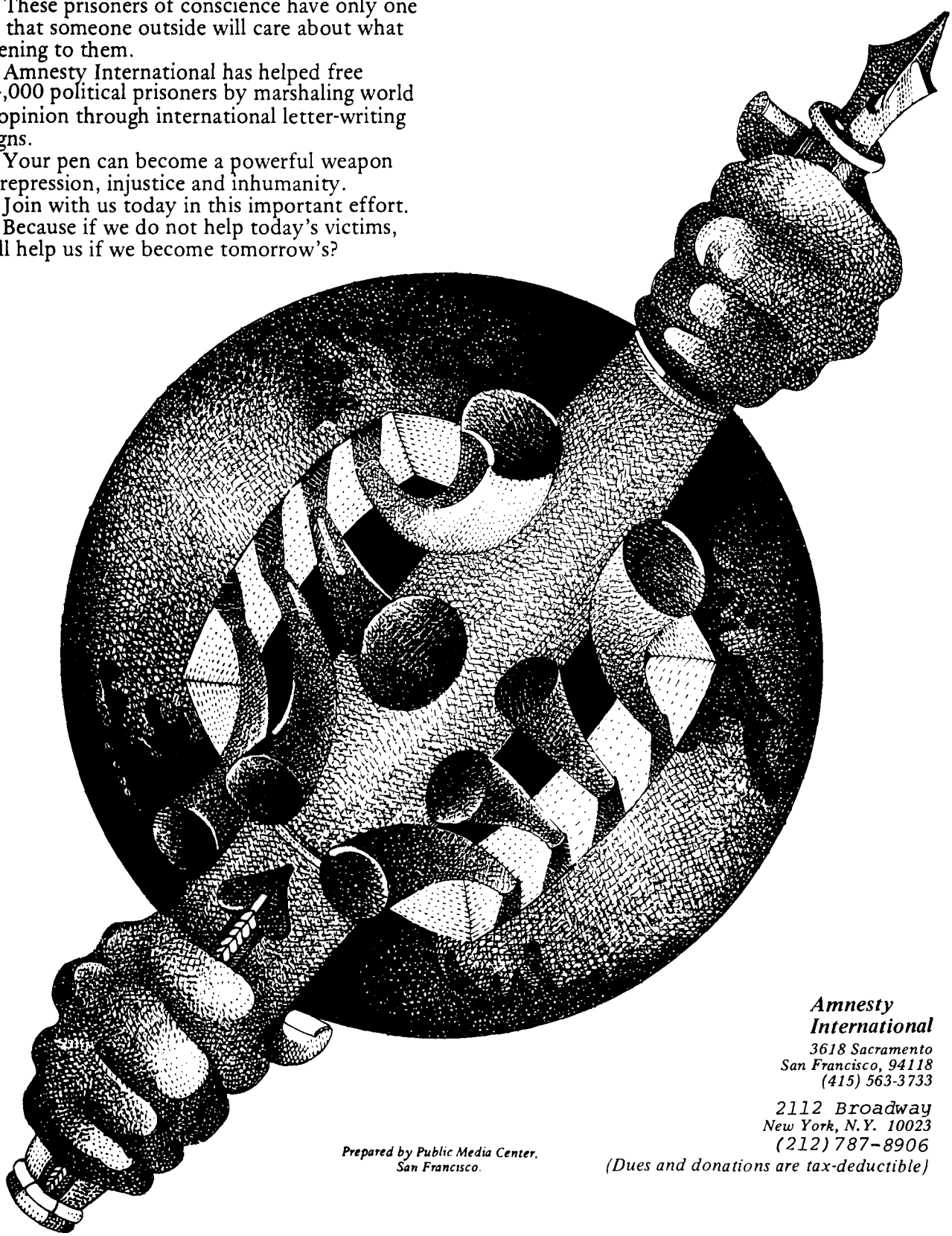

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THE LIBERTARIAN REVIEW

Volume 7, No. 8 September 1978

Amnesty International: Enemy of the State? 10

How does Amnesty International, the winner of the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize, go about fighting the most flagrant statist violations of individual rights? Don Lavoie gives the answers, and explains why AI is important to libertarians.

Prop. 13 18

Associate Editor Joan Kennedy Taylor looks at the tidal wave of the tax revolt and how it can help achieve libertarian goals, while Senior Editor Jeff Riggenbach interviews the *other* author of Prop. 13, Paul Gann.

Buffoonery in Bonn 24

Western political leaders still think they must continually hatch new schemes to stave off a world economic crisis. Instead, explains Christopher Weber in his look at the recent economic summit meeting in Bonn, they can only make things worse.

Big Poison, Little Poison? 28

That the U.S. government is poisoning those of its citizens who smoke marijuana is no longer in dispute. The question, notes Henry Louis, is *how much* they are poisoning us.

DEPARTMENTS

Editorials 4

Hedge's Law
The new reactionaries

The Public Trough 6

The "new" new economics, by Bruce Bartlett

Letters 7

Giving us the business
Justice vs. privacy
Who's really attacking the state?
Victory
Apologies

Books and the Arts 31

John Hospers reviews Gulag III, *by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn; Chris Weber reviews* The Golden Constant *by Roy Jastram; Sharon Presley reviews* Psychobabble *by R.D. Rosen; G.E.B. Charing reviews* On Moral Fiction *by John Gardner and* The World Within the Word *by William H. Gass; Justin Raimondo reviews* Metropolitan Life *by Fran Lebowitz.*

Classified 45

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THE LIBERTARIAN EDITORIALS

The New Reactionaries

FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW closely the national press— particularly the ideological segment of the national press—nothing has been more interesting lately than to watch not the *political* repercussions of the passage of the Jarvis-Gann initiative in California, but the *ideological* repercussions. Jarvis-Gann—Proposition 13—passed by a margin of nearly two-to-one in California, slashing property taxes in that state by two-thirds. Widely called "the shot heard round the nation" and "the opening salvo of the tax revolution in America," Proposition 13 has quickly become a test case of what we libertarians can expect to face in the way of reaction from the protax forces, particularly in the American left wing. *The New Republic* blamed the victory of Proposition 13 on a combination of moneyed interests and libertarian rhetoric, and other liberal and left wing forces have followed suit. But beneath the scorn and hatred lies a haunting fear—a fear that the left has fallen out of step with the American people, and may soon find its influence in eclipse.

We should consider the smears of the antitax forces in depth, both to understand the sort of opposition we are likely to face as we press forward for greater and greater tax reductions in the future, and to equip ourselves to counter its arguments. One of the most lively respondents to the victory of Proposition 13, for example, has been the independent socialist weekly *In These Times*, which has wrestled with the meaning of 13 for weeks. In the August 16-22nd issue, for example, breathless after flying to France to "do research on Euro-socialism," Nancy Lieber wrote that "Proposition 13 was a conscious onslaught on the public sector, and *therefore* a vehicle of class and racial division." [Emphasis added.] This sort of simple-minded, knee-jerk reaction has been typical of many members of the New Class who, like Ms. Lieber (her column is called "In the Twilight of Capitalism: Reflections of Prop. 13 in France"), daydream about "historical forces." But the fear and the anger has not been limited to socialists.

Writing in the August 5-12th issue of *The New Republic*, Ken Bode noted the effects of the victory of Proposition 13 for the Democrats, quoting Michael Barone, vice-president of Peter Hart Associates, a firm that polls for Democrats: "It's especially a problem for our candidates. It means that we've lost control of the dialogue. The anti-government people are determining what we talk about." But they are not just "talking": They are sputtering and fuming, as well.

Writing in the July 22-29th issue of *The Nation*, Senate aide Peter Connolly called the victory of Proposition 13 "The Voice of Raw Greed":

> Its participants were not animated by an outraged sense of justice, but by the ugliest kind of *resentment* and barely concealed racism. Surely the most stunning poll statistic regarding Proposition 13 was the one that revealed that a majority of its supporters thought, with complete inaccuracy, that they were voting to cut welfare. Blacks, sensing this, opposed Proposition 13 solidly. In listening to Howard Jarvis, one hears the voice of an America one thought was blessedly gone, a country of raw economic greed, unmodulated by the precarious though real moral accomplishments of U.S. society during the past thirty years.

Note the extraordinary condescension toward "blacks" here—their interests are virtually *identified* with "welfare," thus reinforcing vicious American stereotypes and covering up the twin facts that more whites than blacks are on welfare in the United States *and* that blacks are the greatest *victims* of the welfare state. This means that Americans fed up with skyrocketing taxes and malicious government programs are *encouraged* by American liberals to use "blacks on welfare" as a scapegoat for their anger. But this only touches the surface of the distortions of this sinister piece.

It is utterly clear, to anyone who watched the battle over Proposition 13 in California, that it was not *Howard Jarvis* (let alone Paul Gann—who ably answers these sorts of charges in his *LR* interview elsewhere in this issue) who spewed forth malice during the battle over Prop. 13, but the liberal members of the New Class, who fought tooth and claw to protect *their* state-gained cash. *They* were the ones projecting "raw economic greed," a "greed" for the unearned, for cash seized from the taxpayers. Moreover, no one who sat in audience after audience during Proposition 13 debates can possibly claim that the pro-13 forces were not "animated by an outraged sense of justice." That is *precisely* what motivated them, a sense that *they are being oppressed*. Liberals like Mr. Connolly cannot understand this because for them self-interest and justice (in this case, justice in property rights) stand in opposition to each other.

In assaulting Proposition 13, Mr. Connolly went on to make extraordinary admissions:

> This is not to say that California's property taxes were not in need of prudent reduction. It is to say that liberals and serious radicals ought to stop banging the Populist drum and doing their bit to destroy the

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ideological legitimacy of our governmental institutions. For the ever growing contempt for government, which is the most perceptible undercurrent in national politics, is essentially a disguised form of contempt for the possibility of humane collective action. And the vogue for neo-Populist rhetoric among some liberals and radicals only feeds this contempt and thus further undermines the prospects for a more decent society. . . .

What is needed on the Left is a return to the language of domestic liberalism, rather than Populism/progressivism; of appeals to moral obligation, and a sense of social generosity, rather than to truculence and resentment. People must be insistently asked whether or not they want a society where retarded children receive decent care, rather than whether or not they think someone is screwing them.

This trotting forth of "retarded children" as a justification for oppressive taxation is about as disgusting an attempt to manipulate the American people as we have seen in some decades. Not only does it smear "retarded children"—some of whom, apparently, grow up to be Senate aides—by trying to tie them into high taxes and government oppression, but it tries shamefully to use benevolent feelings—the desire to help people—as a *weapon* against outraged taxpayers.

No wonder there is a growing contempt for government, and for apologists for taxes!

But what Mr. Connolly's remarks really show is not merely that the liberals have lost the debate, but that they deserved to. One *cannot* create a decent and humane society by taxing people to death. One *ought not* to try to identify government coercion with "humane collective action."

The only truly "humane collective action" in society must come from voluntary cooperation and voluntary associations. Until liberals learn that, they will be reduced to Mr. Connolly's level: singing the praises of a contemptible institution which will stoop to any level to justify its naked greed, and the robbery called taxes which supports such greed.

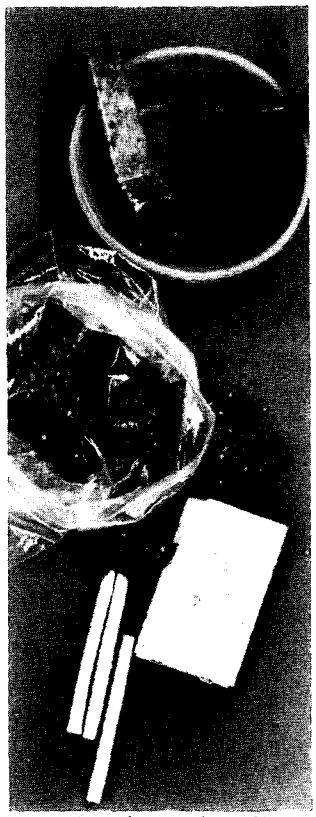
Hedge's Law

A USUALLY RELIABLE PROFESSIONAL associate passed along the story one windy day in July. He'd heard it the night before on the TV news: the story of one James Pearson, who had been arrested the month before on charges of having murdered his wife and two teenage daughters back in 1969 and having buried their bodies in the basement. Pearson had allegedly walked in on his 18-year-old daughter Paula in the act of rolling a joint, when he became enraged and choked her to death. When his wife and 14-year-old daughter came on the scene of the murder and began to scream, said police, Pearson murdered them also. He then changed his name to George David Watson III and embarked on a new and successful career in a new community. Then, nine years later, a subsequent owner of Pearson's house began digging in the basement.

The story was oddly reminiscent of another, gleaned from the pages of the *New York Times* of November 12, 1923, where the following was printed under the headline "Slays Bride Who Had Pack of Cigarettes":

CLARKSBURG, W. VA.—When pretty Luella Mae Hedge, a bride of five months, refused to tell how she came to have a package of cigarettes, her husband, Okey Hedge, shot her dead. Hedge said he was maddened at finding the package of cigarettes in her pocketbook and at her taunting laugh when he questioned her on the subject.

In 1923, as it happens, cigarettes were illegal in 14 states (and tobacco prohibition was under consideration in 28 others), while marijuana was *legal* everywhere but Louisiana, California, and a handful of scattered counties and municipalities. In 1923,



MARSHALL SCHWARTZ

even in those localities where it was prohibited, marijuana laws went largely unenforced, because, as Dr. Howard S. Becker has pointed out, "neither the public nor law enforcement officers, apparently, considered the use of marijuana a serious problem." On the other hand, they considered the use of *cigarettes* an extremely serious problem. Cigarette smoke, Thomas Edison announced in a widely-publicized 1914 appeal to his countrymen to band together against the common menace, "has a violent action in the nerve centers, producing degeneration of the cells of the brain, which is quite rapid among boys. Unlike most narcotics, this degeneration is permanent and uncontrollable. I employ no person who smokes cigarettes."

By 1969, cigarettes were legal throughout the country, were in fact *subsidized* by the government, and marijuana was everywhere *illegal*—the fearsome killer weed whose use would lead to heroin and death. (Interestingly, one of the chief antimarijuana activists of the 1930s, Earle Albert Rowell, argued in 1939 that cigarettes should be banned as well, since their use leads to marijuana and death.) The proscribed drugs had changed; the manner and the rhetoric of proscription had remained the same. And it apparently seemed as reasonable to James Pearson as it had seemed to Okey Hedge to impose the death sentence on she who dared to defy the proscription. They had been told by their government leaders, by the police, by medical and scientific authorities, that to use these drugs was depraved and suicidal. They had been told that their ignorance and bigotry concerning the drug habits of others was actually righteous anger. And they proceeded, as might have been predicted, according to the strict letter of what might be called Hedge's Law. That law, as formulated (but not named) by Professors Lester Grinspoon and James Bakalar of the Harvard Medical School, holds that "raising the subject of illicit drugs sometimes seems to produce an anxiety and abdication of intelligence in those who do not use them that is more disturbing than any effect of the drugs themselves on those who do."—JR □

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THE PUBLIC TROUGH

The "new" new economics

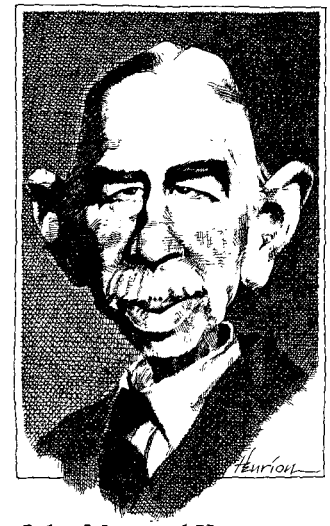
BRUCE BARTLETT

IN THE 1930s, this country saw an economic revolution in which the "new economics" of John Maynard Keynes became the unquestioned orthodoxy in government economic policy. In the 1950s, a counterrevolution to this orthodoxy arose, based primarily on a rejuvenation of the quantity theory of money, which Keynes had rejected. By the early 1970s, the monetarists had won this battle, but the equally critical area of fiscal policy was still dominated by Keynesian thinking. Now, at last, there is a counterrevolution taking place in this area of economics as well.

The main difference between the new fiscal policy and the old is an emphasis on supply, rather than demand—which is the primary emphasis of Keynesian policy. Indeed, the new fiscal policy is often referred to as supply-side fiscalism.

Put simply, Keynesian theory argues that supply takes care of itself or responds to an increase in demand. The problem, therefore, is one of controlling or stimulating demand through monetary and fiscal measures, such as running budget deficits or surpluses. The supply-side fiscalists present the opposite argument: They say demand takes care of itself, and increasing supply is the real way to help the economy. In effect, it is a resurrection of Say's Law, which says that supply creates its own demand (see W.H. Hutt's *A Rehabilitation of Say's Law*).

The difference between the new economists and the Keynesians is most graphically shown by their differing attitude toward taxation. To the Keynesians all tax cuts are the same. It makes no difference whether you have a tax rebate, a tax cut only for those with low incomes, a tax cut only for those with high incomes, whether you cut average tax rates or marginal tax rates, or whether you cut taxes for individuals or for businesses. No matter how you do it, only one thing counts: the aggregate size of the tax cut, for this alone determines how much fiscal stimulus there will be to aggregate demand. Consequently, it makes no difference to the



John Maynard Keynes

Keynesians whether you cut taxes or increase government spending by the same amount. It will have the same effect on the economy.

By contrast, to the new economists, it makes all the difference in the world whether or not you cut taxes or increase spending, and there are vast differences between the effects of various kinds of tax cuts. They would say that tax rebates and increases in spending only stimulate inflation and do nothing for supply, because they must be financed either through borrowing—which crowds private borrowers out of the market—or by increasing the quantity of money through monetization of the debt. Thus they argue that tax cuts should be structured so as to give the maximum stimulus to investment, saving, and work incentive. This means a preference for marginal rate reductions over any other kind of tax cut (the marginal rate being the tax paid on each additional dollar earned), and a preference for tax cuts aimed at corporations and those with higher incomes, because this is where you get the greatest "bang for the buck" in terms of increased saving and investment.

Needless to say, the new economists are pitted squarely against the prevailing liberal orthodoxy, which says that taxes should be increased for businesses and rich people and cut only for those with low incomes. But the new economists have very powerful evidence for their arguments and, in fact, seem to be winning.

One of their important arguments is that you cannot really cut taxes for the poor anymore because they are hardly paying any taxes as it is. In an important article for *Harper's* (March 1978), Paul Craig Roberts pointed out that the upper 50 percent of taxpayers, in terms of adjusted gross income, pay more than 90 percent of all income taxes. The lower 50 percent, with incomes below $8,931 per year, pay only 7.1 percent of all federal income taxes.

New economists Michael Boskin of Stanford and Martin Feldstein of Harvard have concentrated on the effects of taxes on investment. Boskin has found that saving is much more highly responsive to changes in tax rates than

(Continued on page 44)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Giving us the business

APRIL'S "CROSSCURRENTS" served to remind us of the important role which businessmen have played (and continue to play) in the development of the Corporate State. There is little doubt in my mind that a free market could be brought about if that's what enough businessmen want.

While we probably cannot make it seem to businessmen that a free market would be to their advantage, I believe we can make lobbying for a free market seem to them to be in their best interests.

A newsletter, or a section in a magazine, could be set up in which the lobbying activities of businesses could be presented to libertarians. Where feasible, libertarians could then concentrate their purchases from businesses which lobby against regulation and withhold purchases from businesses which lobby for regulation. It should examine those companies whose names appear on the products. This would make it easy for consumers to identify the companies. It would also avoid the complication of trying to trace the course of the products through other companies. This would not be a severe limitation, however, since much of the regulation is on these companies. If successful with them, the process could be extended to other companies.

While our small number would not have a tremendous effect on the business community as a whole, by entirely avoiding the one or two greatest proponents of regulation, and by favoring the one or two greatest opponents of regulation in each industry, we can produce a significant shift. We can get the companies to compete with each other on how vigorously they oppose regulation. Of course, in order to be effective, we would have to let the companies know why we are boycotting or patronizing them.

BRIAN JEDRICK
Nutley, New Jersey

Justice vs. privacy

AS A LIBERTARIAN OF long standing, I found myself well satisfied with *Zurcher* v. *The Stanford Daily,* both for its general application and more importantly, for its strengthening of my own inalienable rights.

Generally speaking, I liked it because it means that if back in Watergate days, a Nixonian newspaper possessing evidence unfavorable to the President had announced its imminent destruction thereof, then Mr. Jaworski would have had not only the right but the duty to move in by the warrant procedure to prevent such an obstruction of justice.

But specifically speaking, and as regards my own inalienable rights, I like it even more. Suppose that my house is burgled, and that an alert newspaper photographer gets pictures of the burglars and their getaway car as they rush from my home with the loot. The decision means that if the newspaper should threaten to destroy such evidence, then I have the right to have my servants, the district attorney, judge, and police, take action by means of a warrant to save those pictures, if they can, thus enlarging my rights not only to bring the burglars to justice but even to the possible recovery of my property.

And consider this example: Suppose that I, though innocent, am on trial for a crime, and I learn that a newspaper has evidence helpful to me which it is threatening to destroy. Again, the decision means that I have the right to have my servants, the judge, prosecuting attorney and police, undertake by the warrant procedure to save the evidence and so to preserve my rights to a fair trail. (It is not difficult to imagine some white supremacy hate sheet threatening to destroy some evidence favorable to an unpopular black defendant.)

Nor are these rights, as now assured by *Zurcher,* anything novel. They correlate, in fact, with the right guaranteed by Article 6 of our Bill of Rights, namely, the right of a person accused of crime to *"have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor."* This means that if I am on trial and need the testimony of some recalcitrant witness, I have the right to bring the power of government to act on my behalf, that is, to have the court issue subpoenas to such persons, who if they still refuse to appear, may at my instance be brought in by force by my servants the police; and thereafter, if without good cause they still refuse to testify, I have the right to have my servant the judge punish them with fine or imprisonment. All this, no matter how poor and humble I may be!

Now, as in the case of all rights, there are no doubt balancing factors, many of which Mr. Schwartz ably presents in his July article. But on the whole, based on the examples I have produced above, I am convinced that all libertarians should rejoice in *Zurcher* v. *The Stanford Daily.*

PARK CHAMBERLAIN
Woodside, California

Attorney Park Chamberlain makes several important points, not all of which can be considered here. In his article "Raiding the Newsroom," LR *Executive Editor Marshall Schwartz did not attempt to set forth a complete libertarian theory of legal procedures. But a few principles were hinted at. Let us spell them out a little more fully. Mr. Chamberlain's case really rests on the phrase in Article 6 of the Bill of Rights declaring that a person accused of a crime is to "have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor." He also refers to the "right to a fair trail." Now, libertarians can and do disagree about the exact meaning of and justification for such things. But surely one thing is clear: that these rights are* procedural *rights, and must of necessity be derived from and* subordinate *to the basic natural human rights upon which any libertarian vision ought to be based. These procedural*

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rights cannot ever contradict more fundamental rights.

And the most fundamental natural right of all is the right of self-ownership and its corollary, the principle of nonaggression: to wit, that no coercion, agression, or force may be used against a noncriminal. Now, I propose that all libertarians ought to be opposed to the Supreme Court decision in the case of Zurcher *v.* The Stanford Daily *precisely because it attempts to establish a government right of "eminent domain," in effect, over all private property in this country, on the flimsy ground that something might be "evidence" of a crime. It establishes the principle that the government can seize any property of a noncriminal it wants; that it can coerce innocent individuals* not because they participated in a crime, *but because they, or something they possess, might conceivably be "evidence" of a criminal wrongdoing. More to the point: What is the difference in the actions of the burglar Mr. Chamberlain uses in his examples, and the hired agents of the government? Both victimize innocent people and seize their private property for their own ends. Mr. Chamberlain speaks of "inalienable rights," but would precisely alienate the rights of the noncriminal who is thus coerced in the name of getting the maximum amount of evidence possible. Moreover, once this principle is established, how can we call a halt to its implications? If a crime is committed, can we move into the relevant area and round everyone into a concentration camp, on the grounds that someone who saw something relevant to the crime might otherwise slip through our fingers?*

As for coerced testimony itself, this seems to me to be even worse. If a person suspected of being a criminal cannot be coerced into offering testimony against himself, on what grounds can a person not even suspected of such be coerced into giving testimony for or against someone else? *Is it not a backwards legal system that exempts a* suspected criminal *from coercion, but* not *someone who is altogether* innocent?

The desire to provide for a fair trail for someone accused of a crime is a valid one, but it is no excuse to allow legal authorities to run amok and seize property, violating the principle of nonaggression, in order to gather the maximum amount of information. There are indeed considerations of moral obligations here, and it may be the case that citizens can even arive at a legal obligation to turn over evidence by means of contracting such with legal authorities. But to give the state apparatus carte blanche *in seizing private property of noncriminals seems to us totally invalid. Particularly today, in our era of manufactured "crimes," it would be a horrible principle to establish—placing in the hands of government authorities power nearly without limit.—Roy A. Childs, Jr., Editor*

Who's really attacking the state?

TOM PALMER POURED out a big helping of invective when he reviewed *How To Fight Property Taxes,* a recent publication of the National Taxpayers Union.

As I presume Palmer is aware, a doctrinaire approach to reaching the public seldom works. Most people, with good reason, recoil from individuals who seem more interested in preaching than in addressing problems.

The Cato Institute and *Inquiry* magazine are examplars of a nondogmatic approach to the public. To avoid being stereotyped as rigidly ideological, *Inquiry*—rightly in my opinion—has seen fit to present a number of viewpoints.

Palmer appears to have no trouble with libertarians at the Cato Institute publishing (some) anticapitalist material in the pages of *Inquiry*—a magazine whose purpose is to build an intellectual movement opposed to the state. Yet he denounces libertarians at the National Taxpayers Union for publishing material that occasionally reflects nonlibertarian premises.

Why? *Inquiry* and the National Taxpayers Union share a desire to be just unpredictable enough to be *heard.* Palmer should enlighten us about his double standard: Presumably, intellectuals and taxpayers are equally vital constituencies to mobilize.

Palmer should also explain his curious haste to denounce "user charges" for institutions that presently use tax-supported municipal services without charge. Introducing a "user pays" principle would do much to usher in a libertarian society. The reason is simple. By ending cross-subsidization, the reform would give *everyone* a reason to work for inexpensive provision of services. Thus, the "user pays" system would lead ineluctably to privatization.

To those who prefer libertarian posturing to results, reforms are beside the point. But I would suggest that Palmer attack the enemy—the State—rather than snipe at the all-too-few organizations that share his goals.

MARK FRAZIER
Director
Local Government Center
Santa Barbara, California

In his letter, Mr. Frazier makes a valid point and then proceeds from one non sequitur to another. As I made clear in my review, no single approach to the public is appropriate in all circumstances. But there is no need, when not laying out the full "hard-core" line, to substitute for it with statist proposals in order to be "unpredictable." (By the way, I challenge Frazier to cite examples of "anticapitalist" material in Inquiry. Inquiry *has been anti-*state-*capitalist, not anti-free-market; apparently, from his letter and various other ventures into print, Frazier is unable to make this vital distinction.) As I have made clear on many occasions, I do not think it is necessary to shock potentially libertarian, irate home-owners with the complete "taxation is theft" line when trying to motivate them to take action against government aggression. However, to attempt to divert their antitax ire into a movement to tax churches, to increase the salaries of tax assessors, and to increase the sales and income taxes is simply grotesque. Their energies and anger should be directed toward decreasing taxation and government power, not increasing it. I have not spoken to a single libertarian or libertarian sympathizer who did not have (at least) strong criticisms of the Lewolt book, including James Tobin, author of the preface, who admitted to me that he had not read the book before its publication. I am appalled that someone who goes around calling himself a libertarian could, without* one word *of qualification, defend a book whose*

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central point is to increase the taxes of others in order to decrease one's own (not only is this profoundly statist, it is inefficacious as well; such "tax-the-other-guy" strategies never work—the government just increases taxation unevenly).

Further, what Frazier calls a "doctrinaire" approach—namely, one in which one mentions "freedom," "liberty," or even opposition to "big government"—clearly does work in many cases. Frazier must not read the papers, for if he had he would have noticed that the exciting and "doctrinaire" (using Frazier's terminology) Proposition 13 passed in his state of residence by a margin of two to one against a barrage of hysterical propaganda and trumped up "impact statements."

It seems that Frazier not only does not read the papers, but evidently he did not read my review either. He takes no cognizance of the fact that I did not call for "preaching" in my review and he fails to address one of my central points, namely that "user charges" for state "services" are not "fees," and the services provided are not services. So long as one is uable to refuse the privilege of being ruled, the involuntary charge for it is not a fee; it is robbery. If we can charge churches without their consent for police and fire protection they cannot refuse, what is the difference between this and any other act of robbery? Why not charge a "fee" for the privilege of living in a state-"educated" society; the so-called "free rider" benefits that statist economists and politicans moan about are the same in both cases. Lewolt's claim that we are justified in taxing churches because "they can hardly plead poverty" is maliciously insensitive to the important moral considerations of libertarianism. A political viewpoint which is not motivated fundamentally by moral considerations inevitably falls prey to the hoary clutches of statism. (This should not be interpreted to preclude the use of other arguments in a public context, however.)

Why need the National Taxpayer's Union be "unpredictable" (i.e., occasionally statist) in order to be heard? The media, which has been deluging N.T.U. with requests for statements about their plans in the wake of Proposition 13's victory, is not interested in their views because they are unpredictable, but because they expect them to be predictable. They expect them to lead a nation-wide tax revolt, not to bore them with proposals for wider fire hoses and increased salaries for tax assessors.

My own interest lies in results and not in mere "posturing," as Frazier implies. I would honestly like to see Frazier, however, attack the state even once. His most recent article in Reader's Digest (February 1978), detailing how efficient (compared to other municipalities) the government of Scottsdale, Arizona is in picking up trash cans, hardly dealt a blow to the state or to its intellectual basis. More to the point, how is it "attack[ing] the enemy—the State" to announce to the millions of Reader's Digest's readers that there is "no cause to fight city hall" (sic) in Scottsdale because the government is "is fighting for the taxpayers", (sic) as Frazier did? Calling for efficient government, as Frazier does, is quite different from calling for liberty. Libertarians should hail government inefficiency, because the things governments do are wrong. Either they have no business doing them and are invading the province of society, or they are actively engaging in immoral and unjust violations of rights on a wholesale scale. Will Rogers summed up the libertarian approach when he quipped, "Thank God we don't get all the government we pay for."

So long as certain people continue to range themselves on the side of the state "in the short run," while posing as libertarians "in the long run," I will continue to criticize them. This is the very same cancer which devastated the classical liberal movement, and it is my fervent hope that the modern libertarian movement will not fall prey to its siren call.—Tom G. Palmer

Victory

RE: "VICTORY IN CALifornia" by Roy A. Childs Jr. in your July 1978 issue.

This one hit the spot. It put so nicely into words what I think in my head and what I feel deep inside. Hopefully, that social sickness whereby people relate to each other by way of institutionalized brute force (also known as government) is on the decline.

R.A. KLEIN
Railroad Worker
Monterey Park, California

Apologies

Apologies are in order to two LR contributors who have had their work mangled by the editorial knife. David Ramsay Steele had the meanings of several passages in his article "Who's Twisting Now? A Response to Edith Efron" (April) changed and garbled, so that he ended up appearing to say the opposite of what he meant.

In the same issue, Justus Doenecke, one of America's foremost scholars on the literature of isolationism and nonintervention, saw his actual view of the America First Committee distorted when, through error, the adjective "notorious" was inserted in describing it at one point. Since neither LR's editors nor Prof. Doenecke view the America First Committee as "notorious"—it was dedicated to keeping America out of World War II—that insertion was particularly unfortunate.

Our apologies to both Mr. Steele and Prof. Doenecke!

THE EDITORS □

UNTIL NOW, NO AUTHOR HAS DARED TO CHALLENGE THIS ASPECT OF YOUR SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BELIEFS

Dr. Walter Block demonstrates how you pay a burdensome economic and emotional price by not defending such victims as the pimp, prostitute, drug pusher, slanderer, slumlord, profiteer, loan shark and scab. Now his book *Defending the Undefendable*, has itself become a victim. Although this intellectual adventure has received rave reviews from Hayek, Szasz, Hazlitt, Rothbard, Hospers, Nozick, MacBride, Childs, Palmer and many others, it has been virtually banned by the nation's bookstores as too controversial. So order your hard-cover copy directly from the publisher. $9.95. 3 week moneyback guarantee. Or send for brochure.

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Amnesty International: Enemy of the State?

DON LAVOIE

"Everybody asks what do I need and what they can send me," wrote Soviet "prisoner of conscience" Mark Nashpits to Amnesty International's Adoption Group No. 17 in Great Neck, New York. "I need freedom."

That simple plea from the prisoner in Tshita, Siberia, to the group of middle- and upper-class Americans with whom he had been corresponding had momentarily brought two completely different worlds into contact: the dark, isolated, lonely world of a prisoner had touched that relatively free, comfortable existence with which most of us are so routinely familiar. The contrast was a bit jolting. Concrete prison walls had met hamburgers and drive-in movies. Electric-shock torture implements had been introduced to portable hair dryers. Muttered complaints about rush-hour traffic had come face to face with desperate screams for a sadist's mercy. Our relatively trivial day-to-day problems had temporarily intersected the nearly hopeless existence of an innocent human being, enslaved and tortured by agents of his government.

This is the essence of Amnesty International: making the world aware of governments' worst crimes against individual human beings.

Torture has been a stain on human history since long before the Spanish Inquisition made it into a holy institution. Today, in the modern scientific age, the very latest discoveries of the very brightest minds of our time are applied in the fast-growing field of Torture Technology. Sophisticated experts in medicine, psychiatry, biochemistry, and many other fields pool their intellectual resources to determine precisely the combinations of pain, isolation, fear, intimidation, demoralization, discomfort, sexual abuse, drugs and other techniques of human degradation which will destroy the will while keeping the body physically alive, and perhaps even conscious in order to prolong the pain. It used to be necessary in order to save our souls. Now it is necessary to save us from communism, or from "capitalism," or from terrorism.

Even the Inquisitors did not try to claim that torturing people like this would make *this* world a better one.

According to Amnesty International, torture is used by over 60 national governments today, and is used regularly and systematically as a normal, operating *official policy* by at least a third of them. Concern with politics is thus of crucial importance today for the simple reason that any *other* contributions we may try to make to the lives of our fellow men and women—from nuclear energy to drug research, from medicine to computer science—runs the serious risk of being appropriated and transformed by governments into tools of repression. We may study pain and the nervous system to find ways of alleviating human suffering, only to have our skills abused by sadistic "doctors" (as, all over the world, torture experts nearly always call themselves) who are trying to *maximize* human suffering. Political power will continue to divert the productive efforts of human beings to its own purposes, to protecting its own privilege by crushing any resistance, until enough people come to realize that they have the strength to stop these "official" criminals.

History knows no social force as potent as an overwhelming popular consensus: a people terrorized, taxed, conscripted or otherwise bullied into saying, "We're fed up," and removing tyranny. Governments are only as solid as the myths they perpetrate about how necessary they are, myths whose frail foundations have already been exposed. And only mass dissemination of such exposes to the state's victims is necessary before statist mythology goes the way of religious apologia for inquisitions.

Amnesty International is one of the world's most powerful organizations for arousing public opinion against these blatant abuses of human rights. It engages in research, documenting and verifying the mistreatment of prisoners all over the world, and publishes its findings for the historical record. But more importantly, it seeks to enrage the public with these brutal facts, to disgust them

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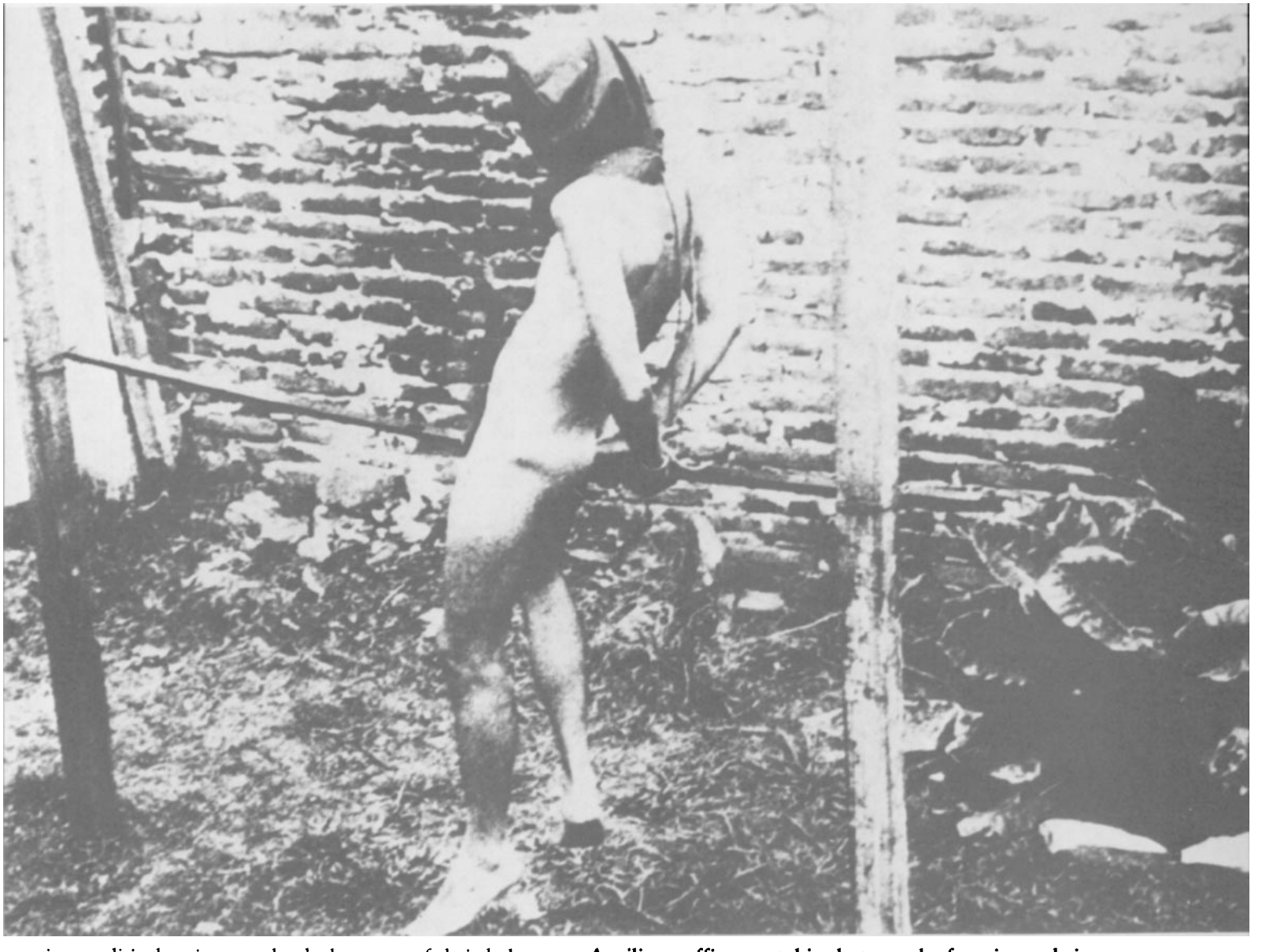

A military officer sent this photograph of a prisoner being tortured in Uruguay (with "el caballete," or the sawhorse) to Amnesty International because of "the revulsion I feel for all that I have the misery of witnessing."

into political action, to shock them out of their lethargy into doing something. It reports on fingernails that are ripped out of human hands, because it believes that if most people realized this was going on they would want to stop it. It details the plunging of hot irons into terror-stricken eyes, because it believes that if they were your eyes you would not want this crime to be forgotten. When Amnesty International publishes grisly accounts of crushing genitals, sexually abusing women and children, forcing people to crawl over nails and then stand to receive their daily beatings, denying them sleep, food, toilet facilities, communication, trial by jury, medical care . . . it is not because its members can stomach these outrages any more than the rest of us. On the contrary, it is just because these crimes make them *sick* that they insist on repeating them. It is bad enough that these things happen at all, but when they happen *in silence,* when they go on occurring regularly, routinely, sanctioned and excused by the highest leaders of the world's governments, then none of us can afford the luxury of averting his eyes from the horror.

If we on the "outside" are serious about wanting to put an end to these subhuman practices we must at least be willing to become and remain informed. AI is the leading research organization for documenting extreme abuses of rights around the world, and for this reason alone ought to be supported wholeheartedly by every decent person. We must identify the people who are both permitting and perpetrating these crimes, and we must unmask the laws and institutions that make them possible. And then we must *fight* them.

With their long, though increasingly corrupted, tradition of individual liberty, Americans should be in the forefront of this battle. We should be particularly concerned when we learn that the American state, while not an especially blatant offender directly against its own citizens, aids in numerous ways the continuation of this gross affront to humanity. Our tax dollars have helped to prop up many of the most obnoxious of these official criminals: CIA agents have trained torturers; U.S. Immigration Service thugs have blocked victims from escaping the sadists' knives. And they are still doing so. And they are doing this with *our* tax dollars. We cannot avoid these unpleasantries by ignoring them. We are involved.

Just to take one example of the complicity of the U.S.

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government, consider the case of the Phillipines. The imposition of martial law in September 1972 was (not coincidentally) simultaneous with a 106 percent increase in military aid from the United States, supplying the dictatorship with tools of repression at the rate of $40 million a year (see Bello & Rivera, *The Logistics of Repression*). According to the Phillipine government's own estimates, within a few weeks of this American-financed suspension of traditional liberties, some 30,000 individuals had been arrested and detained. President Marcos has almost completely undermined the formerly independent civilian judicial system, shifting the law into his military courts. AI reports that the torture of martial law detainees has been "widespread and systematic." For example, of 107 prisoners from eight detention centers that AI interviewed, 71 reported that "they had been subjected to brutal treatment and torture" (*Matchbox*, Winter 1977). As usual, these reports were scrupulously doublechecked against independent testimony, and many specific torturers were named by prisoners from different detention centers who had had no previous opportunity to meet. Typical was the ordeal of two sisters who were forced to watch each other endure 45 minutes of electroshock each:

> You can't help screaming—it makes you writhe all over . . .
>
> We had hallucinations afterwards—we each lost five pounds from the torture sessions. We couldn't walk straight. We had burns on our hands. They didn't allow us to sleep for almost two nights running. We were threatened with rape from the very beginning.

These are not isolated instances of abuse by a few sadistic cops. They are representative of a systematic, government-sanctioned program of repression which Marcos could not have instituted without the substantial assistance of the American government.

Then there are the United States immigration restrictions—vicious cold-war relic that accepts refugees from communist countries, but turns away victims from right-wing tyrannies on the grounds that they would compete for American jobs. Beyond the fact that there are good economic arguments why open immigration would *improve* the standard of living of American workers (see Richard Ebeling's article in the June 1978 *LR*), does this make *you* proud to be an American? Would you personally keep an innocent person in prison to keep him from competing freely with you for your job? Yet there are agents of our government, *acting in our name,* doing precisely that. There are people in South American prisons who, but for the U.S. government, would be free men and women, and who are mistreated by their own governments every day.

E.L. Doctorow reminds us that we cannot avoid these events by regarding them as other people's problems. Their horrible world is closer to us than it seems:

> You and I might by nature avoid stepping on insects, but the torturers of Iran and Chile are as close to us as the child is to the parent. They are our being, born from our loins. A terrible connection is made with these dark exotic faraway places, these barbaric civilizations who do not have our tradition of freedom and justice: they are ours. We made them with our Agency for International Development, and our Office of Public Safety. We made them with our Drug Enforcement Administration and our

Amnesty International member participates in a Prisoner of Conscience Week demonstration at the Indonesian consulate in San Francisco.

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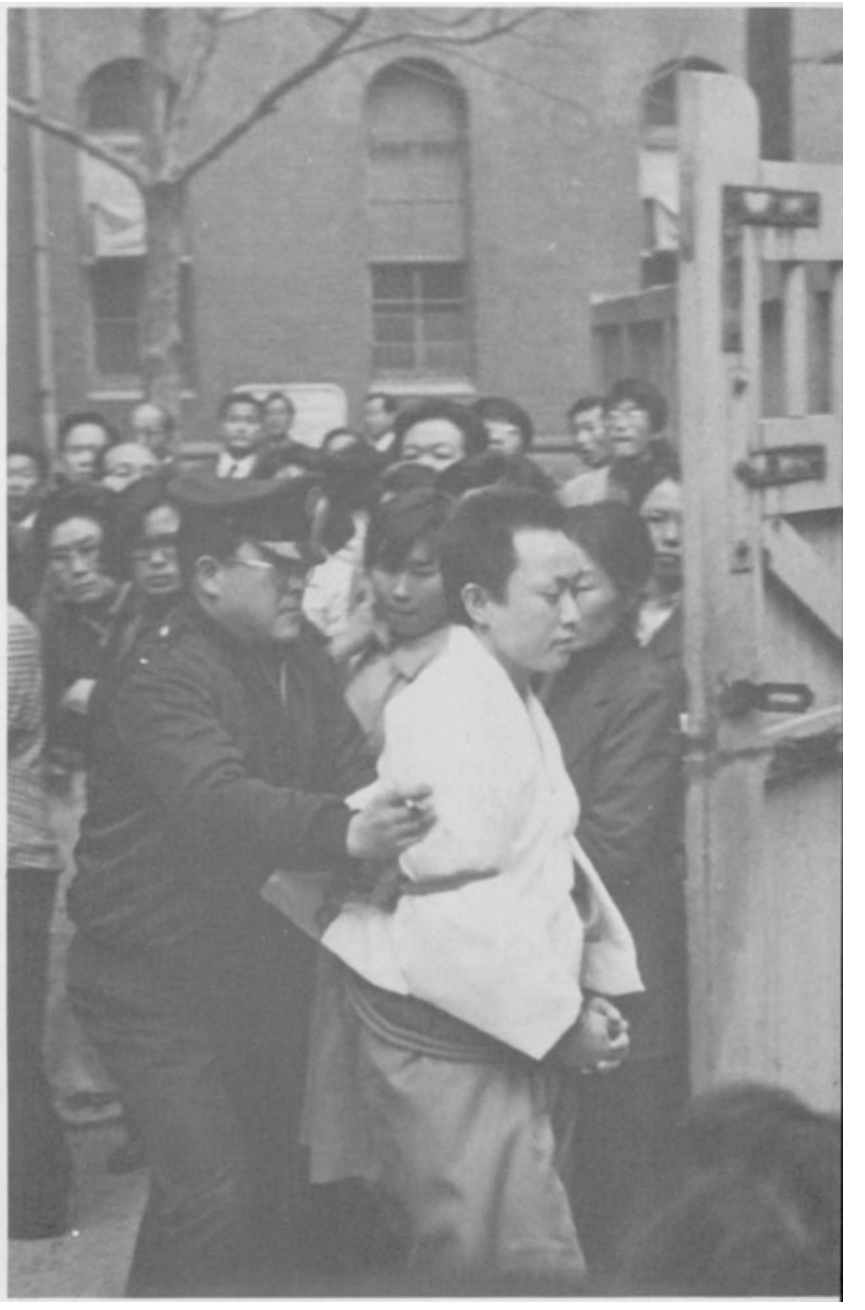

South Korean "prisoner of conscience" Kim Won Jong being led into courthouse for High Court trial in May 1976.

Military Assistance Program. (*Matchbox,* Summer 1977)

Amnesty reports on violations from all contemporary political systems, from fascist Argentina to agrarian-communist China, from monarchist-feudal Iran to racist-apartheid South Africa, from Marxist-Leninist Ethiopia to "democratic" Italy. When AI–USA's Larry Cox was asked if there were *any* countries in the world which stand out as at least *relatively* decent in this nauseating parade of cold-blooded cruelty, he was able to tentatively suggest *two*—after a long pause that said as much as his answer. Amnesty International has a lot of work cut out for it.

How Amnesty works

"I am grateful to be free. I know in large part this is because during my years of confinement many people associated with Amnesty International steadfastly continued to bring my case before public opinion and state authorities."—Vladimir B. Bukovsky

Amnesty International was founded in 1961, after an appeal by British lawyer Peter Benenson. It quickly became an international organization, largely on the efforts of Sean MacBride (Nobel Peace Prize laureate, 1974), and today has more than 168,000 members and supporters in 107 countries. Its International Secretariat in London has a 100-member staff that handles nearly 5000 cases of human rights violations each year. From June 1976 to June 1977 AI responded to violations of human rights in 116 countries, sent missions and observers to 22 countries, issued 70 news releases on 36 countries, published extensive reports on 19 countries, and dispensed over $200,000 in relief to prisoners and their families. In that same period, the cases of 2,285 new prisoners were taken up and 1,657 adopted prisoners were released.

The central activity of the organization is case work for individual prisoners, conducted by its 2000 adoption groups and national sections. Each group works for at least two "prisoners of conscience" from countries other than its own—countries that are balanced geographically and politically to ensure impartiality. (Interestingly enough, by attacking both left-wing and right-wing governments, AI unwittingly induces a bias for libertarianism.) Amnesty does not advocate or condemn any particular form of government but simply reports on, and applies public pressure against, severe human rights violations wherever they occur. The London research staff supplies each adoption group with detailed information about each particular prisoner's situation—e.g., which officials in the state or prominent individuals in the community to send appeals to, what to say or not to say to improve the prisoners's chances for more decent conditions or release, what specific institutional obstacles (such as immigration barriers) there may be and how to confront or circumvent them. Writing politely worded letters to officials may seem a desperately futile gesture against people with the ethical constitution of torturers, but the amazing fact is that AI gets results. In its 16 years it has aided in securing the release of over 8,000 of the 15,000 individual prisoners of conscience on whose behalf its members have worked.

Beyond its adoption groups' case work, AI has a variety of specific projects to amass broader organizational pressure where needed. It sends missions to various countries to investigate the treatment of prisoners—wherever the countries will let them in. It produces well-documented reports on investigated countries, in addition to publishing its quarterly, *Matchbox,* and its annual *A.I. Report,* which details violations in over a hundred countries. Amnesty also organizes separate campaigns which permit members to select the issues they want to concentrate on: the Campaign to Abolish Torture, the Prisoner of the Month Campaign (which focuses broader organizational strength on a particularly difficult case), Prisoner of Conscience Week (the second week of October), greeting cards for prisoners, specific country campaigns, and "Urgent Actions" (emergency cases in which time is dangerously short—due, for example to the failing health of a prisoner, his imminent execution, or his ongo-

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ing torture).

This variety of action programs makes AI an ideal institution for people of almost any political persuasion to join. This carefully structured organization isn't just a collection of well-intentioned folks flailing in vain at the behemoth states of our time. It is an effective, professionally run, flexible, and yet specifically focused activist organization. It does not exist merely to assuage the guilty consciences of middle-class liberals. It is a brilliantly designed force on the political scene and, especially now that it has received the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize, it stands a reasonably good chance of significantly changing the world.

Amnesty is absolutely independent of any government, and, due no doubt to its extensive research, in fact shows a healthy distrust of all of them. David Hawk, the Executive Director of AI–USA, for example, writes that "sovereign states—with their age-old and inevitable tendencies to repress the rights and liberties of their citizens—cannot be entrusted to preserve and protect human rights" (*Matchbox,* Fall 1977). And Dr. Mumtaz Soysal, vice-chairman of the International Executive Committee of AI, succinctly declares that "human rights will not be protected if left solely to the governments of this world" (*Matchbox,* Winter 1978).

Thus the organization wisely avoids using one state to pressure another, recognizing that no one government can accuse another without hypocrisy, and that human rights, as Larry Cox of AI–USA has remarked, should not become reduced to a mere tool of foreign policy. (Indeed, an aggravated international scene and its product, war, are the primary breeding grounds for rights violations.) Instead, it stands outside of governments, utilizing its growing resources to amass public opinion on an international scale to pressure all governments to limit their abuses of rights.

Amnesty has had a significant positive influence on the United Nations, with which it has consultative status, and it constantly presses for observance of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. International bodies which represent the very governments that commit these atrocities cannot be expected to defend human rights consistently. Thus a recurrent UN debate has been waged over whether so-called "economic and social rights" can be used to justify watering down demands for political liberty. In this battle, Amnesty has unwaveringly come down for an absolute commitment to individual liberty. Commenting in his address to the recent AI–USA annual meeting in San Francisco, C.L. Lamb emphasized the fundamental difference between these kinds of "rights":

> Civil and political rights are capable of being ensured by restraint on the part of government. Economic and social rights, on the other hand, can only be assured by the adoption of policies geared to positive action on the part of governments . . . . It is difficult, if not impossible, to contemplate a uniform standard for the right to an adequate standard of living.

AI does not explicitly reject these so-called "socio-economic rights" the way a libertarian would. While we would argue that these "rights" actually constitue severe *infringements* on the rights of businessmen to establish and profit from any noncoercive business ventures they care to undertake, Amnesty spokesmen tend to concede that they are legitimate rights, but rights which cannot override basic political rights. AI is committed to allowing *nothing* to serve as an excuse for violating the simple political rights the organization is specifically mandated to uphold. Indeed, if Amnesty had the resources behind it, the consistent application of its own defense of prisoners of conscience would invariably lead it to defend peaceful tax rebels and "free-enterprisers of conscience" everywhere. And we all know where *that* avenue leads!

Does AI go far enough?

"Amnesty International was not founded to work for general economic, social and political justice in the various countries of the world—however much its members may wish to do so, and are free to do so through other bodies—but to bring relief to individual victims of injustice."—Amnesty International Handbook

AI clearly is not a libertarian organization. It does not defend actively every category of individual rights. It cannot be expected to come to the rescue when a businessman is prevented from hiring someone at a mutually agreeable wage, or when a prostitute is routinely jailed for practicing her profession, or when a young person is forced to attend public schools. Amnesty rather concentrates its resources on what Larry Cox calls the "classic prisoner" cases—i.e., those particularly gross violations of basic rights which most people would immediately recognize as such.

Some libertarians might argue that since all rights are indivisible, it is arbitrary and hypocritical to focus on certain commonly recognized instances of coercion to the exclusion of less popular but equally unjust violations of rights. If the *conscription* of conscientious objectors, which Amnesty opposes, is to be condemned, while *taxation* of conscientious objectors for the income they earn from January to May is to be condoned, is this not a fundamental inconsistency which principled libertarians should forthrightly denounce? If governments fail to assemble via the draft enough cannon fodder for their wars, is it then *justice* when they coercively collect taxes to pay mercenaries instead? Can one justifiably object to a war by refusing to fight it but not by refusing to *pay* for it?

Yet Amnesty is not a broad-based political movement that is responsible for addressing all social and political issues, and should not be judged by such standards. It is a specific, ad hoc organization that purposefully (and wisely) limits its goals, and remains noncommittal over all questions outside its carefully circumscribed mandate. From a strategic point of view, it would be foolish for Amnesty International to bite off a broader challenge than it can chew effectively.

There can be no question but that AI's defense of human rights is incomplete. But it is no condemnation of an ad hoc organization to say that it doesn't do *everything*. It is the most impotent of imaginable strategies to reject every cause that does not fully coincide with one's complete political ideal, or to reject possible allies on one issue only because they are our opponents on another. If, by joining a cause, *one step* toward liberty can be taken without directly worsening anyone's freedom, then one should join that cause. We must always *promote* consistency in the application of rights, of course, but we cannot afford to *insist* on consistency among all allies as a precondition for our every political action.

Even so, it is important to realize that AI is so designed

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as to have a natural tendency to universalize its own understanding of human rights. A "prisoner of conscience" is defined as anyone imprisoned for his beliefs who has neither used nor advocated violence—which is close enough to the libertarian principle of nonaggression to provide for a considerable overlap in evaluating individual cases. Amnesty's continual application of this principle forces it to face up to the tricky cases brought before its Borderline Committee. Last year, AI decided to accept a gay rights case as within its mandate; and as the group's influence grows, it encounters broader and broader appeals. That Amnesy, like libertarianism, is fundamentally concerned with applying universally a simple principle of freedom, makes this organization ideally susceptible to being nudged, by its own borderline cases, into a continually more comprehensive defense of liberty. Amnesty's mandate seeks to remove from the world's prisons all those who have neither used nor advocated violence, which is one *giant* step in the libertarian direction of *also* removing all those who have not *initiated* the use of violence.

Consider the following example: In 1976, Admiral Sudomo, head of the Indonesian state security agency *KopKamtib,* announced that government's three year "release program" which, translated from the Orwellian newspeak of the announcement, actually meant altering the location and surroundings, but not the *essence,* of prison. Between 1969 and 1977, the government relocated on Buru Island some 14,000 of the estimated 55,000 to 100,000 political prisoners it holds (most of whom are now in their 13th year of imprisonment without trial). This is exactly the kind of borderline case that expands the application of the slogan, "release those imprisoned for their beliefs who have neither used nor advocated violence." This case highlights the question of just what a prison is. Is it only the "classic": the concrete walls, barbed wire, and guard towers? Or can it not also be a Buru Island? These "liberated" prisoners have been forced to clear a tropical jungle, to build their own detention camps, and to *produce* food and livestock, one-third of which is seized by their military guards.

The Indonesian government offers the same justification for its "resettlement centers" that the U.S. government offers for its immigration policy: *unemployment,* this time in Java. Once again a government tries to solve an employment problem by *restricting* people's free choices about where they live, what they produce, and what they do with their property. Once again a government is using coercion against innocent persons to "protect" jobs. Beyond the fact that no jobs are created by such coercive activities, but are only shuffled around at a net loss to everyone, who among us would have the impudence to defend such practices? Who among us can excuse keeping an innocent man *in* a prison, or *on* an island, or *out of* a country, to keep him from competing with us in free, voluntary transactions?

Happily, the Indonesian government's excuses for its crimes have fallen on deaf ears at AI. That organization's defense of individual rights as inviolate against any claims for so-called "socio-economic rights" has kept it from exonerating the Indonesian authorities for their no doubt sincere concern over their unemployment statistics. And Amnesty's humanistic attitude has kept it from being conned either by this disguised prison or by the flimsy arguments for delaying the full release of these prisoners. These people, who have already suffered so much, AI has declared, "should not be forced to endure for another day the harsh conditions of prison or separation from their families"—most of whom, not too surprisingly, did not want to move to Buru Island. Amnesty has distinctly rejected the government's lame suggestion that these people have been freed, stating concisely that "[f]orced exile to a distant and harsh location does not constitute a 'release' of political prisoners."

As an oppressive state tries to relieve itself of international public pressure by changing the form of its coercion while retaining its essential *content,* Amnesty is naturally led to block these evasions at every turn. Once you begin to examine the essence rather than the surface appearance of governmental activities, the logic for extending the defense of rights to all areas becomes in-

Prisoners on the Indonesian prison island of Buru have had to build all their own facilities since they were relocated there from regular prisons.

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Indonesian prisoners live in camps under the most primitive of conditions.

escapable. A prison is, in essence, only a special and extreme point along the continuum of constraints upon liberty.

No doubt the founders of AI were unaware of the full radical implications of their own principles, and its members cannot be expected to immediately carry this logic as far as we would like. But especially with our influence from within the organization, libertarians can be a positive, universalizing influence. We can take some pride in a significant comment an AI leader in New York made to *LR* Editor Roy Childs and myself: "You guys [libertarians] are like Amnesty International's good conscience, always keeping us honest."

Overlapping goals

"In a world of increasing brutality, internationalization of violence, terrorism and torture, Amnesty International used its forces for the protection of human values. Its efforts on behalf of defending human dignity against violence and subjugation have proved that the basis for peace in the world must be justice for all human beings."
—citation for the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize

Whether one endorses AI on every single issue or not, libertarians should support this humane and effective human rights organization. It is precisely the kind of international, principled, strategically sophisticated, and widely respected group with which libertarians can enthusiastically involve themselves. Far from being a reason to avoid the organizaztion, the fact that Amnesty's members and leaders are not fully consistent advocates of liberty is rather another good reason for joining it. Here is a group whose clearly stated goals overlap ours, and whose members are advancing our interests even though many of them have never heard of libertarianism. In their daily activism these people continually confront some of the most grotesque of the crimes of governments. Such people should be as ripe for our ideas as we are for their activism. What better opportunity can we imagine, not only for increasing the clout of our own activities but also for influencing these partial allies in the direction of our wider perspective?

But more importantly, we should remember what libertarianism is all about. The people of the world do not *need* to tolerate the treatment of human beings in ways the ASPCA would not tolerate for dogs. We have the power, if we are willing to work for it, to wield the tremendous weight of an international popular consensus against such atrocities. Let us echo the appeal by E.L. Doctorow (*Matchbox,* Summer 1977) and commit ourselves, as a first step toward achieving a free society, to the modest proposals of Amnesty International:

If you or I do not condone torture, who among us does? If we abhor gangsters and tyrants and dictators, who among us installs them in their power? Let us have their names, who act in ours. □

Don Lavoie is a graduate student in economics at New York University. His essay "The Decay of Radical Socialism" appeared in the October 1977 issue of LR.

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A WARNING TO AMERICANS

Harry Schultz, international investment consultant, receives $1,250 per hour for his advice.

By Harry Schultz

I've always felt very strongly that no book should be written unless there is a genuine need for it. Douglas Casey's book, *The International Man*, is a book that fills a *true* need, in fact, a desperate need.

Furthermore, it does the job professionally. I've read so much garbage about "how things are abroad" by scores of U.S. or Canadian writers based on their vacations out of the U.S. or Canada, or a period of residence abroad that was short and limited in scope. As I'm known to be a "mold" for what an international man probably is, I'm naturally not taken in by amateurs. Thus, I trust my praise of this book will carry some weight for it deserves wide distribution. I've lived in every really important country in the world. I have offices and homes in many countries and I'm now as much at home in Copenhagen, London or Paris as in the U.S. cities where I grew up. I say this so you'll give credence to what I say about this book's quality, and also to emphasize the purpose of this book, i.e., to make a case to become an international man (or woman) yourself.

One grows up thinking one's country is the greatest, especially Americans. I think, in fact, it probably *was* the greatest for a certain period of history. But all countries have changed now to the point where they now consist of faceless bureaucracies, spouting varying degrees of socialism and zooming along the high road to Big Brotherdom. To make socialism work, it is necessary to make a kind of robot of all citizenry. The only hope of escaping this, in part or in full, is to be very international, maximizing your options and untying yourself from your concepts of red, white and blue patriotism. This is no longer just amusing cocktail chatter; it's life and death in terms of freedom—physically, financially and psychologically.

The coverage on passports in this book is especially intriguing. I predict you'll read it with your breath held, unable to lay the book down. These matters we had no need to think about 10 to 15 years ago. But now they have become survival essentials. The world has changed, scientifically for the better, but politically for the worse. We must change, too. If you're not good at changing to match the times, you had better read this book *three* times. The rest of you should read it *twice*.

By the way, it's no good saying, "Things are bad all over; I may just as well stay put and stick it out." That's a lazy excuse at best. Things are not *equally* bad all over, but even if they were, you gain by being flexible and not belonging to one country or being so irrevocably tied to one. Ideally, one should always be a "foreigner," wherever you are. That way, you have more freedom of movement and less tax exposure. One can be a foreigner in varying ways. Certainly your assets must be internationalized via citizenship, via an alternative home, and most importantly via know-how. Learn about foreign banks. Learn to be at home everywhere. Learn how to cope with any situation. Learn now, before so many barriers are built that you'll have no choices of action left.

Learn to think in terms of German marks and Swiss francs. Make foreign investments. You will build a wall around yourself if you are only able to think in terms of dollars and Wall Street. We have, in fact, two walls to knock down; the one we erect ourselves and the one governments have built. The latter is tough enough. The least you can do is be sure the first wall is flattened.

Another concept I urge you adopt: just because you were born in a given country doesn't mean you need to stay there, or that it's automatically the best, or the best for you. It is, in fact, a sin, in my view, to have lived most of your life in just one country. How provincial, how narrow, how you have cheated yourself of viewing the world with wide-angle lenses, with 3D vision. How can you profess to be a proper citizen of the world if you have not actually lived (no vacations please) in at least two other countries for a few years? You owe it to your mind to move about. And this is quite aside from the financial and political necessity to be international. I have long thought a requirement for a man to run for President of the United States should be that he has lived abroad for at least two years. How can he pass judgment on foreign policy if he has never left Chicago? If you feel that makes sense for a president, why not for you?

Some people are less mobile than others by virtue of special problems. But there is *no* justification to be completely provincial. Not if you want to survive. I urge you to take the advice of this book and become an international person. As Emerson said: Choose which laws you will (or can) live under. You're not stuck with any set of laws. The limitations are the windmills of your mind. Go forth. Grow forth. Good luck and welcome to the world.

(Reprinted from the Foreword)

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The International Man: The Complete Guide to the World's Last Frontiers for Freedom Seekers, Investors, Adventurers, Speculators and Expatriates, by Douglas R. Casey, may be ordered from Kephart Communications, Inc., Dept. 3429 , P.O. Box 2599, Landover Hills, MD 20784. The price is $14.95 postpaid and tax-deductible. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. SA911

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Proposition 13

Riding the Tidal Wave of the Tax Revolt

JOAN KENNEDY TAYLOR

The pundits don't quite know what to make of Proposition 13. What does the idea of tax limitation, an idea whose time seems to have come, mean to the United States? "Meat-axe radicalism," wrote Walter Heller in the Wall Street Journal. "Popular mistrust of public officials gives license to middle-class greed," wrote columnist Joe Kraft. Columnist Carl Rowan called it "mobocracy." Michael Harrington said, "As a man of the democratic Left, I was of course appalled by the passage of Proposition 13 in California." And an editorial in the New Republic said that "a blending of libertarian rhetoric with cash prizes for the middle class is the central appeal of the new backlash that is gaining momentum in the country."

It's all very well for writers to call a popular movement names, or even for a bureaucrat like Patricia Roberts Harris of HUD to say that Proposition 13 was "rather like burning down the barn to roast the pig." But people who earn their livings as a result of popular elections are understandably more cautious. Bill Brock, Republican National Chairman, thought it meant that "people are just plain sick to death of more government than they need and more taxes than they can afford," while California's Democratic Governor Jerry Brown called it "the will of the people"!

One thing is unmistakable — there is suddenly a nationwide antagonism toward taxes. School taxes and bond issues have been defeated in Ohio, in Illinois, in Virginia, in Michigan, and in Texas. Tax limitation amendments may be going on the ballot in several states. In Massachusetts, for instance, at least 25 percent of two successive legislatures must endorse a petition-initiated amendment to the state constitution before it can be submitted to the voters. After a petition campaign last fall in which the Libertarian Party played a large part, 90 percent of the Massachusetts legislature (222 to 23) endorsed a tax limitation amendment on June 28.

A nervous Congress has been slashing between two and five percent from appropriations bills. The United States Conference of Mayors felt called upon to urge the federal government to spend less, ignoring the fact that the fastest growing item in the federal budget is aid to local governments. An ABC News-Lou Harris poll in June found a 62 percent majority in favor of a tax limitation amendment for the voter's home state. A CBS News-New York Times poll found 78 percent thought government was "wasting a lot of the money we pay in taxes." And, not to be outdone, NBC News and the Associated Press found that 83 percent of those polled knew what Proposition 13 was (far more than knew the name of their own congressman), and two-thirds of those polled favored an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to limit all taxes.

Something important is obviously going on. Do any libertarians remember the old Liberty Amendment, the constitutional amendment to eliminate the income tax? It was one of those charming, abolitionist ideas that we *knew* wouldn't really get anywhere but was a good propaganda tool, right? Well, Howard Jarvis cut his political teeth on the Liberty Amendment, and now he is telling press conferences in Washington, "I hope to educate the capital about what happened in California," and there is talk in Congress and in nationwide polls about a constitutional tax limitation.

Everywhere you go these days, people are beginning to sound like libertarians. Politicians are falling all over their feet in their rush to endorse tax limitations, tax cuts, even ceilings on their own salaries — anything that will enable them to warm themselves at the conflagration started when Howard Jarvis, as columnist Mary McGrory put it, "dropped a match in the dry brush of property owners' rage."

A gentleman from California visiting in Massachusetts said he had worked for Proposition 13 and he knew policemen and firemen and school teachers who voted for it, because they either owned their own homes or had elderly parents who did. "If I get laid off from my job," he quoted such people as saying, "I can find another one.

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But *this has to stop.*"

A woman lawyer for a major corporation said at a New York party, "I would do anything to help limit taxes in New York. My daughter is a public school teacher, and she's going to be able to retire before I can. I pay for my own pension plan, but my taxes are paying for hers, too. Remember when they said that the unions 'generously' lent their pension funds to the city? That was our money! There's millions of dollars in those funds that belong to the taxpayers! *It has to stop.*"

UPI

Howard Jarvis spread the fear of the tax revolt in Washington when he met with Republican senators (including Robert Dole of Kansas, in the background) in mid-June.

In Otis, Massachusetts, a taxpayers' revolt put the police department out of business at a June town meeting. Rejecting a proposal to add another full-time policeman, making a total of three, voters chose instead not to fund the department as of July 1. All that was left of the Otis police a week after that was a recorded message on the telephone, saying "if this is an emergency, call the state police at Lee" (a neighboring town of about 6,000). A spokesman for the state police said to a reporter that he was surprised they weren't getting many calls from Otis. In mid-August, Otis residents voted not to pay for their police force for the rest of the year.

Many libertarians have been concerned for a long time as to how the reversal in the size of government would come about. The New Deal formula of "We will spend and spend, and elect and elect" seemed to be unbeatable at the ballot box. Well, not any more. We have a genuine, nationwide, grassroots tax revolt going on here and it's going to change things. We had one before, and it changed things, too, in 1776.

There were two conditions necessary to our breaking from England, and they prevail today. First, taxation was imposed above a level which the people perceived as "reasonable." The author of Parkinson's Law, C. Northcote Parkinson, speculated in a 1960 book calling for tax limitation that people and capital will start to move away when taxation exceeds 10 percent. If there is no place better to move to, they will put up with taxes of up to 20 percent, but above this limit, each increase brings specific evil results. First, tax avoidance stiffens, productivity begins to level off. At 25 percent, taxes cause inflation. At 30 percent, national influence begins to decline. At 35 percent, loss of individual freedom accelerates and people begin to lose hope. And at 36 percent, he says, "there is disaster, complete and final although not always immediate." Taxation in the United States now takes 40 percent of our gross national product.

The other condition necessary for a tax revolt is that it is perceived that the taxes are laid by some people upon others. During a major war, for instance, when people think they are fighting for survival, they will put up with taxes as high as 50 percent. Today in the United States, this condition, too, has been fulfilled. Americans don't know the name of their congressman, not because they are dumb, but because they rarely feel that he represents them. They *know* that the bureaucrats they have to deal with don't represent them. And in general, as Murray Rothbard pointed out in his speech to the 1975 Libertarian Party Convention, in the aftermath of Nixon no one says that "the government is us" anymore. Americans in huge numbers have perceived that those people in government are *not* us, and that they are taking our money and wasting it according to standards of their own.

A political reporter for the *New York Sunday Times* evaluated Proposition 13 this way, on June 11: "The grumpy electorate may be rejecting government. In California, 6.5 million people voted on Propostion 13; only 5.7 million voted for any candidate for governor. If either party can successfully appeal to that concern — antitax, antispending groups in many states reject both parties — it may be able to score gains in November that traditional measurements would not foretell." Libertarians, are you listening?

"The people" is not just a collection of special interest groups, as politicians have been assuming for too long. "The people" is made up of individuals. The sense of fairness that so many commentators have noticed as a characteristic of our culture has finally turned against those who thought they could spend and spend and elect and elect forever. We may be fortunate enough to be living at the beginning of the end of American Big Government. □

Joan Kennedy Taylor is associate editor of *Libertarian Review*.

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Paul Gann, Revolutionary: An LR Interview

JEFF RIGGENBACH

If the pundits don't know quite what to make of Proposition 13, neither do the politicians. Some, like California Governor Jerry Brown and law-and-order State Senator George Deukmejian, have bounded onto the tax-revolt bandwagon. And their example has been followed in recent weeks by politicians all over the country. Others, like the elected officials of San Francisco, Oakland, and Sonoma County, California, have begun calmly replacing their lost property tax income by imposing increases in "fees." "In the wake of Jarvis-Gann," the San Francisco Chronicle reported in mid-August, "county officials across the state have raised fees for such services as building permits, septic tank permits and routine construction inspections." In Sonoma County, the cost of a building permit has gone up 20 percent, the cost of a septic tank permit has nearly tripled, and other costs have been adjusted so steeply that it can cost nearly a thousand dollars merely to obtain the permits to build a vacation or retirement cottage there. Californians, needless to say, are fighting mad, and one of the maddest is the man who helped start it all in the first place, Paul Gann.

Gann is a retired real estate broker who lives in the Sacramento suburb of Carmichael, headquarters for his statewide taxpayers' activist group, People's Advocate, Inc. People's Advocate came very, very close to qualifying a Proposition 13-type ballot initiative in 1976, the same year Southern California tax rebel Howard Jarvis almost accomplished the same thing. In 1977, they joined forces behind the same petition drive—and made history. Gann is more soft spoken, even retiring in manner, than Jarvis, and the crotchety, acid-tongued president of the Apartment House Association of Los Angeles has thus captured most of the headlines since Prop. 13 became a national issue. But, as *LR* discovered during an early August meeting with Gann in the office of People's Advocate in Carmichael, a soft-spoken, retiring manner can merely mask the soul of a revolutionary with an iron determination.

LR: How do you feel about how Proposition 13 has been implemented?

Gann: It's been terrible. In fact, most of our local bureaucrats, almost all of them, have in some way circumvented Proposition 13. They no longer call it taxes; they call it dues and fees. But we don't care what they call it as long as they're depleting the funds which come from our wallets. Some cities have increased their sewer fees by 500 percent and the cost of building permits by 1000 percent. We've gone to court in San Francisco and Oakland because of the way the bureaucrats in those cities have violated the spirit and the letter of Proposition 13. We trust the court will rule that a fee is a tax. If it doesn't and the cities are legally allowed to raise these fees, then of course we'll have to do something else. I've been working with Senator Deukmejian since June, trying to get his budget limitation bill out of committee, so that it can get on the Assembly floor. If we can get that out of committee and get it on the ballot this fall, what it will do is put a cap on the budgets of all governments in the state of California—cities, counties, school districts, everything. *[The measure was not approved by the legislature—JR.]* Now, if we can do that, that's going to help. I don't know that that will complete the job. I hope it will. But if it doesn't, then we may have to circulate *another* petition.

LR: *Time* magazine commented recently that Proposition 13 proves the willingness of California voters to tolerate "cruel, destructive cuts in public services" in order to reduce taxes.

Gann: There haven't been any. Whoever wrote that story wrote it from an interview with some old maid schoolteacher or something, because those cruel cuts aren't coming. During the campaign one of the universities even verified the claim that if Proposition 13 became law it would cost 450,000 jobs. By the end of June that had become 50,000, and now it's dropped to 9,000. And now I'm worried, because normally we lose 86,000 people every year just through attrition alone. They're spending

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more money now than they did before Proposition 13 became law.

LR: Do you think we need further tax cuts beyond Proposition 13?

Gann: We're going to have to have them if some of our state officials are telling the truth. The California state treasurer, Jess Unruh, recently said that we're going to have another four to five billion dollar surplus in the state treasury at the end of 1978-79. Now if that's true, after we cut taxes by six billion dollars, then it's obscene, and I wish there were some way we could send the people responsible for it to jail. In a state where people are being taxed beyond their ability to pay, to have those kinds of surpluses is absolutely cruel and should be criminal.

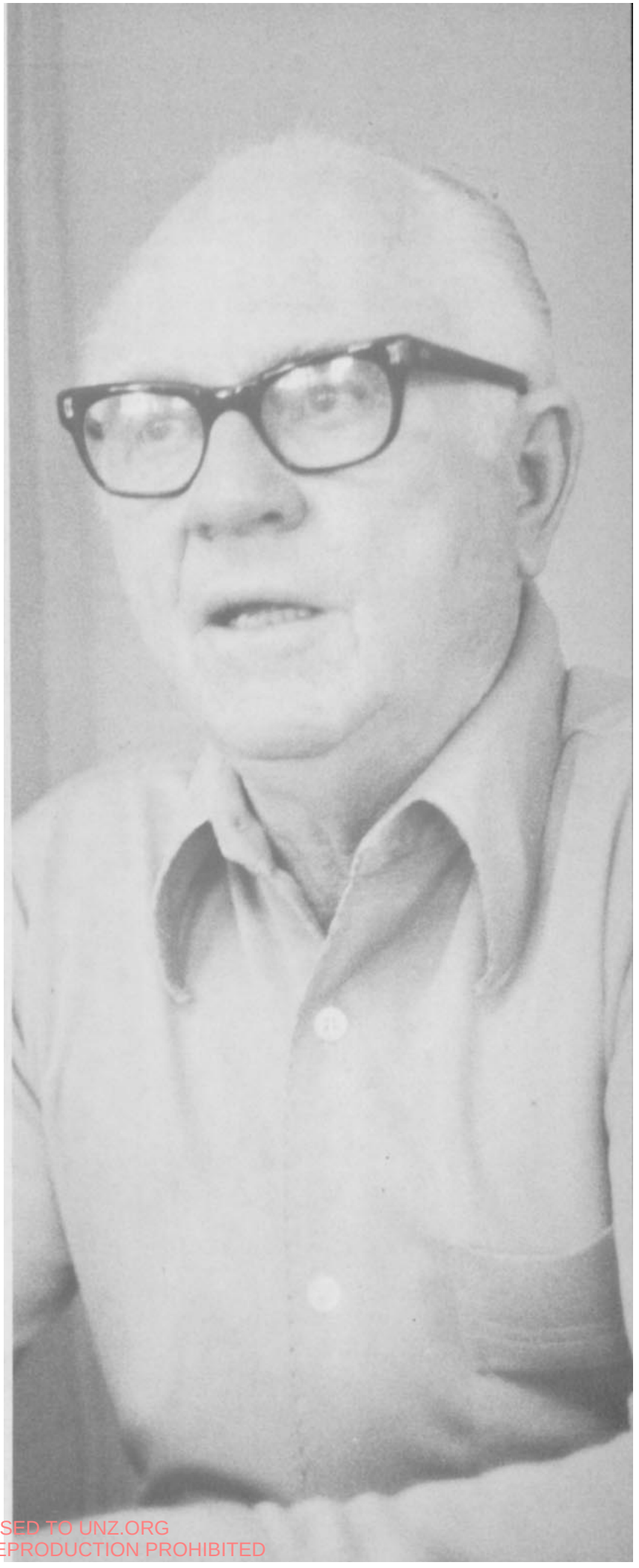
LR: How about nationwide? Is a national tax revolt in the works?

Gann: Well, there certainly is a lot of unrest. I've been in 11 states myself and every one of them is ready to fight. In fact, in Oregon, the first state I went into, they've qualified a property tax initiative for the ballot this fall. The next state we worked with was Michigan. They've qualified *their* property tax initiative. Idaho has an initiative which will be on the ballot to limit spending, which is just as good. We have about 16 or 17 other states. I just received a telegram from Florida. I was down there because they were having a little trouble getting going, and they sent me a nice telegram thanking me for coming down and saying that, come hell or high water, they were going to qualify their initiative. They tell me that tomorrow morning I should have five to ten thousand people at a rally in New York; it's been the same in Virginia, Maryland, Colorado, wherever we go.

LR: There's a move afoot now to amend the U.S. Constitution to limit federal spending. Do you think Proposition 13 had something to do with spurring that?

Gann: No question about it. You see, what Proposition 13 did was convince people that we can do something. Despondency and apathy had set in over the years, and people had gotten to the point where, even in talking to me, they would say, "Well, what can we do? There's nothing we can do. Anything we do they'll beat us one way or another." But I don't believe that. The only time you're whipped is when you refuse to get up. They got up this time. And look what happened. People throughout the other 49 states have taken heart. They're saying, "They did it, in California!" I see a difference in the expressions on people's faces. The gleam is back in their eyes. They aren't ashamed to be Americans anymore. They're taking a position and they're not being doormats. That's what we've been for years, really. Bureaucracy has run this country. We now have a fourth branch of the government—the bureaucrats. And they now dictate to the three legal branches. When you think about the amount of real power elected officials have today in our government, it's almost frightening. They don't have a lot to say about what's happening—they can only say "yes" to special interests.

LR: A great many politicians have jumped on your bandwagon since Proposition 13 passed, even politicians like Jerry Brown who opposed it before it passed. And when you consider that Jerry Brown is a liberal, you see that politicians from both the liberal and conservative constituencies are coming out in favor of tax reduction. Yet a lot of people in the media are calling the tax revolt a conservative backlash, a swing to the right. Do you think



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that's accurate?

Gann: That isn't true at all. They'd like to make it that. *People* in the state of California, as well as in the rest of the states, are tired of being pushed around by bureaucrats. They would like to see the government get out of their personal lives. They'd like to start thinking a little bit for themselves. The proof that the government does a lousy job is that it started out 30 years ago to control the lives of the people of this country and manage them and it's only gone into debt 500 billion dollars in the last 22 or 23 years trying to accomplish that. That isn't a very good success story. They've failed utterly. Too many of us forget that before the government giveth, the government taketh. That's always true.

LR: *The New Republic* has described the tax revolt as libertarian. They say "a blending of libertarian rhetoric with cash prizes for the middle class is the central appeal of the new backlash."

Gann: This is not a specifically libertarian movement. It's not a right-wing or a left-wing movement. This is the people. The people are tired of being milked like a Holstein cow with an electric milking machine.

LR: It's been pointed out by your critics that only the Swiss and the Japanese pay fewer taxes than Americans, comparing all the citizens of Western, free-world countries. The Danes pay more, the Canadians pay more, the English pay more. . . .

Gann: I couldn't give a damn less what they do in England. I don't live in England. If I lived there I'd be raising holy hell, because the Queen, I understand, gets five million dollars a year. And anytime I had to share a john with two other families because I couldn't make enough money to pay my taxes and live, I'd be out picketing in front of Buckingham Palace. I keep hearing about what they're doing in Europe. Who cares? I don't live there. I live *here*. And just because those people are stupid enough to sit down and allow themselves to be used as sanitation paper doesn't mean we have to follow their example. Our forefathers all came from those other countries over there, and they came over here because they didn't like what was going on there. So now we have to bring it with us? No, we don't.

LR: So you wouldn't agree that it's greed that's motivating the people who voted for Proposition 13?

Gann: Greed is what has brought us to where we're at. The people now are waking up to the fact that what we have been going through in the last several years has really been a phony prosperity based on borrowed money. Look what inflation is doing to us. According to a report I have out of Washington, D.C. the average American family's living standard is now going down at a rate of $270 a year. *Down*, not up. And that's an *average*. Of course there are some people, particularly the people who work for the government, who get a guaranteed cost of living raise every year plus a little more pension. They could care less. Why should they care as long as the taxpayer is willing to continue to pay and not object? I wonder what's wrong with people objecting to being robbed. There's a People's Advocate member in Malibu. He's 80 years old and he's probably wealthy. I never knew that was a sin. I always thought that was the American ideal. If you're smart enough to make money, make it. But this man's property tax has gone up from $2000 to $5600 and he is upset. He says, "The fact that I can afford to pay it is beside the point. When people take my money, I want them to show enough respect to pull a gun on me." And I agree with that. They talk about greedy taxpayers, because we're trying to save one or two of our own bucks. These bureaucrats continuously leech and take. In San Francisco they bought $265,000 worth of stoves and refrigerators over the last two or three years, and now they can't find a stove or a refrigerator. And *we're* "greedy" and "mean" and a bunch of dirty bastards if we don't like that. A food stamp store closed recently because the boys in charge left the door open one night and packrats came in and got five million dollars worth of food stamps. We don't like that. Really we don't. But then of course if that's bureaucracy you're not

LESLEE NEWMAN

"Greed is what has brought us to where we're at. The people now are waking up to the fact that what we have been going through in the last several years has really been a phony prosperity based on borrowed money."

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"Right now, we can exercise a lot of influence. Proposition 13 has inspired the people of this country to the point that they now know that they can win, if they're willing to get out and put their hearts and souls into it."

supposed to say anything about it. They'd better clean up their act, that's all I have to say about it, because we're developing some of the most beautiful resignation forms you've ever seen.

LR: Some of the critics of Proposition 13 have called it an example of "mobocracy." They say the whole initiative process is a means of allowing what they call "kookie" policies and unwise decisions to take the form of law.

Gann: Kookie? Unwise? While the bureaucratic planners are busy planning bridges and freeways that go nowhere and bridges that don't have highways at either end of them? Such brilliant things as that? And the health, education and welfare system that admits to seven billion dollars a year being stolen from it—that kind of perfection? Doesn't make sense, does it? These people are afraid they're going to lose their banana. Who knows? Some of them may have to start working in private enterprise. That would really crush them. I think their honeymoon's over. The bureaucrats have had their way in this country so long that they seriously believe we're invading their privacy—they really do. But how long do they think we can continue borrowing money to maintain this phony prosperity? They think we have nothing to worry about—if you run out of dough, you raise the debt ceiling and you print some more money. You borrow again. Except that is the phoniest thing we do, because what we're doing is hocking the very souls of generations yet to be born. What's so great about that? If you took a gun and did it, it'd be honest, anyway.

LR: Who's your favorite in the California gubernatorial race?

Gann: Well, I only have two choices and one of them isn't Brown. That's about the nearest I can come to endorsing anybody. The Libertarian candidate, Ed Clark, would be, no doubt, a tremendous governor, but I think we all know that the race is going to be between the attorney general [Republican Evelle Younger] and Governor Brown. Whether that's right or wrong is beside the point. I think Governor Brown has been a very brilliant politician in his move on Proposition 13, but I also remember that just three weeks or so before the election the governor said, "If you vote yes on Proposition 13, don't come to Sacramento expecting the state to bail you out, because we will not be your sugar daddy." Then on the eighth day of June, two days after the tremendous vote for Proposition 13, he said, in essence, to the people of California, "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That's what you'd call a 180 degree turn in about four weeks. I hope the people are thinking about his position before the election. I hope. I also hope we will eliminate some legislators, because we made one tremendous mistake last time: We sent back 86 percent of the incumbents. We sent the mess back to clean itself up—and that's never happened. And it never will happen.

LR: Is tax reduction all the cleaning up you're interested in seeing?

Gann: No. I don't want to win just Proposition 13. To me it's no panacea. It's only a step in the right direction. That's all it's ever been. Eventually we want to limit the term of office that a legislator can serve. We'd like to see each legislator spend six months out of every year at home with his constituents. We love 'em up here in Sacramento, but we don't want them turning into residents, you know. And we will eventually return control of the income of the top echelons in government to the people, so that they can't vote themselves those outrageous salaries. It's ridiculous that we've allowed the government to go to the point where it dictates our lives completely. As an example: When the government can tell you where to send your kids to school, to me that's the last straw. I just can't understand people taking that, myself.

I wish I could convince Howard Jarvis that we can't stop with Proposition 13. Howard's a first-rate radical, but unlike me, he wants to be known as a radical. If you're known as a radical, it's not long before you don't have much influence any more. And right now we can exercise a lot of influence. Proposition 13 has inspired the people of this country to the point that they now know that they can win, if they're willing to get out and put their hearts and souls into it. □

Jeff Riggenbach is senior editor of Libertarian Review.

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Buffoonery in Bonn

The Western leaders' fourth economic summit produced nothing more than some amusing press reports.

CHRIS WEBER

World economic summits have become an annual fixture. The most recent was in July, in Bonn, West Germany. But it is increasingly apparent to all concerned that such summits don't really solve anything, and that whenever the bold proclamations made at these gatherings are realized it is only because the participants had planned beforehand to realize them anyway. Further, it is becoming apparent that most of these proclamations rest on spurious economic logic. In fact, if we scan the history of these summits, we see that they are really only exhibitions of political showmanship, whose antics have either amused or disgusted the world, but whose successive promises of a better world to come have followed each other into the dustbin of history.

In 1975, the world found itself in the worst economic straits since the Great Depression. Two-digit inflation was rampant, and unemployment was climbing everywhere. In times past, only one of these ills—either inflation or unemployment—or sometimes neither, was present at one time, but to have them both wreaking havoc at once was something fairly new. Moreover, the world monetary system had collapsed (see "The Shattered World Economy," January-February LR), and the old, fixed exchange-rate regime had given way to the inflationary floating rates of today. To the world's politicians, the situation cried for "action." The leaders of the six largest economic nations responded by agreeing to gather in an economic summit to discuss their plight at Rambouillet, an 18th century palace near Paris. The summit was called with great fanfare. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson lauded it as "a development without precedent in economic history." But the reality was nothing like the myth. In Mr. Wilson's own capital of London, a similar conference had been held in 1932—a remarkably similar conference both in the programs offered and in the results attained. Then as now, France was the world's preeminent supporter of hard money.

In 1932 that nation had demanded a return to the gold standard. And 42 years later they took another hard-money position: They proposed a return to fixed rates, which in today's world was about the best they could expect. Their hopes in both cases were dashed, each time by American wishes for a world money system characterized by official caprice. That original London conference featured proposals for a coordinated world inflation through an internationally funded scheme of public works projects, concerted fiscal and monetary policies aimed at reflation, and official supports for world commodity prices. All three of these proposals also found their counterparts at Rambouillet, and they fell on fertile ground both times. There were also better (i.e., noninterventionist) proposals common to each conference: for a truce on tariffs, and for gradual abolition of controls on imports and capital movements. Not surprisingly, these overtures were twice ignored. The Rambouillet summit took place over the weekend of November 15-17, 1975. We shall quote at greater length from the communique issued at the end of *this* summit than from any of the later communiques, because this first one set the tone for its successors.

The Rambouillet conferees began by introducing themselves in no uncertain terms: "We are each responsible for the government of an open, democratic society dedicated to individual liberty and social advancement." Next, these libertarians boldly set forth their positions:

> The industrial democracies are determined to overcome high unemployment, continuing inflation and serious energy problems. The purpose of our meeting was to review our progress, identify more clearly the problems that we must overcome in the future, and to set a course that we will follow in the period ahead . . . . The most urgent task is to assure the recovery of our economies and to reduce the waste of human resources in-

Christopher Weber writes frequently on financial topics for LR and many other publications. Parts of this article have been revised from Mr. Weber's piece in "The Swiss Economic Viewpoint" of July 1978 (published by Foreign Commerce Bank, Zurich).

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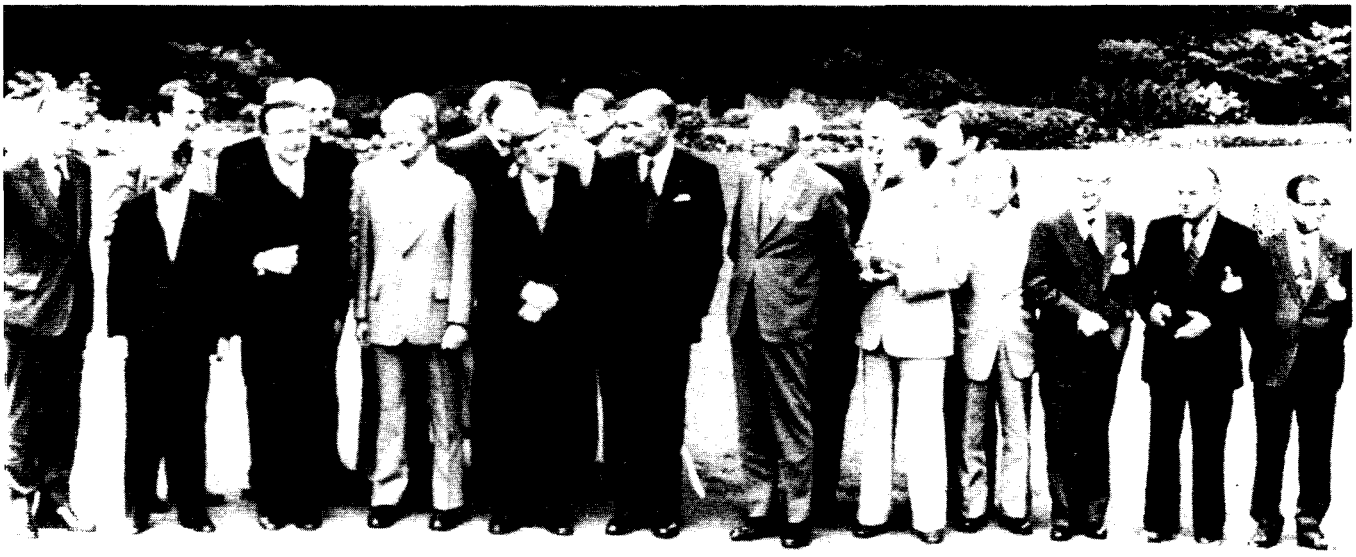
volved in unemployment. In consolidating the recovery it is essential to avoid unleashing additional inflationary forces which would threaten its success. The objective must be growth that is steady and lasting. In this way consumer confidence will be restored . . . . We will not accept another outburst of inflation . . . . In a period where pressures are developing for a return to protectionism, it is essential for the main trading nations to confirm their commitment to the principles of the O.E.C.D. pledge and to avoid resorting to measures by which they could try to solve their problems at the expense of others; with damaging consequences in the economic, social, and political fields.

The government leaders uncovered such profound truths as this one: "A cooperative relationship and improved understanding between the developing nations and the industrial world is fundamental to the prosperity of each. Sustained growth in our economies is necessary to growth in developing countries. And their growth contributes significantly to health in our own economies."

Reading between the lines (and indeed, it is tedious to read the lines themselves), one sees the global exhortation that emerged from Rambouillet: "All together, inflate!" As if politicians needed to meet at a French chateau to decide *that*.

colored ultrasuede sports jacket"; that "yesterday the United States Secretary of the Treasury, William F. Simon, wore a pink coat and green plaid jeans," and that "President Ford's Sunday dinner included roast prime beef, bibb lettuce salad and *petits fours*. Several members of the American delegation were observed lounging about, not appearing to be doing any particular preparatory work for the first session yesterday, while the Japanese Prime Minister, Takeo Miki, it was rumored, played golf." When Secretary of State Kissinger was cornered by reporters and asked about what the summit hoped to achieve, he replied that it was being held "mainly to review the international situation with a particular emphasis on economics." It was only further down in the *Times* article that the report finally revealed that "the most important specific piece of business, a high West German official said, was to instruct the Italians and the British on the need for more fiscal, monetary and wage restraint."

Western leaders and their aides prepare to pose for their formal group portrait at Bonn—one of the few tangible items produced at the meeting.



UPI

William Simon wears pink

So each of the national economies represented took that exhortation to heart, and inflate they did. The summit itself had proved to be remarkably good publicity for the participants, and, with almost indecent haste, they decided to stage a repeat performance. Seven months later, seven "leaders"—Canada's Trudeau having joined the heads of state of Japan, West Germany, Italy, France, Great Britain, and the United States—ensconced themselves in a Puerto Rican resort, "isolated in tropical splendor," as the *New York Times* put it.

Few results were expected, and the expectations were richly fulfilled. The same generalities were both exchanged among the participants and trumpeted forth to a weary world. The summit solved nothing, but at least it provided a pleasant vacation for the politicians and their staffs of bureaucrats. The *New York Times* of June 29, 1976—the day after the conference's close—could find very little to report on. The article was reduced to revealing that "the British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, 'in a moment of levity', fingered Mr. Kissinger's cream-

In other words, "All together, watch inflation!" After this weekend "instruction" was over, the suntanned teachers and pupils returned home to conduct business as usual.

The Puerto Rico summit was a flop. It certainly didn't increase Gerald Ford's standing in the eyes of the American people enough to elect him president that November. One year later, therefore, the United States had a new president, Jimmy Carter. He too was eager to play the role of "leading world economic statesman." One of his administration's first acts was to arrange for the London summit of May of last year.

Things went swimmingly at that conference for Carter's image as a leader; but one year later, looking back, that image seems more like a mirage. The communique issued at the parley's end proclaimed that the creation of jobs was "our most urgent task." Read "inflation" for "creation of jobs" because, sadly, that's the only way governments seem to believe economies can grow. This is true regardless of the familiar promise "to reduce inflation" which attended that statement. If politicians were really serious about creating jobs, they would slash taxes

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and abolish such strangling regulations as minimum wage laws, which particularly hurt the young. Youth unemployment *was* given high billing in London. But to cure it, the participants agreed to "an exchange of experience and ideas": "Wait for it," mocked the London *Economist* a week later.

Perhaps sensing that the public was losing patience after hearing once again the same old bromides on economic matters, the London summit turned into a forum for the multiple discharge of the various politicians' particular *political* preoccupations. Resolutions were passed agreeing to eliminate "irregular practices and improper conduct"—better known as bribery and corruption—in business, and Carter, at a news conference, pronounced himself "ah, impressed" by this act of bulldog courage. There were also pronouncements on such disparate issues as energy (find more of it); nuclear proliferation (stop it); and human rights (protect them).

The primary concrete result of the talks was that the seven nations, for the first time, stated "growth targets" which they promised to abide by. For the following year, the United States pledged an economic expansion of 5.8%. The others followed suit: Japan, 6.7%; West Germany, 5%; France, 3.25%; Canada, 2.75%; Italy, 1.25%; and England, 1%. For the designated "boom leaders," Germany and Japan, the stated targets meant excessive inflation.

Big deal at Bonn

Fortunately, these promises were not kept. Although these targets were publicly stated, the politicians went home to follow whatever policies they had already planned to pursue. As a result, neither Bonn nor Tokyo inflated as the Americans wanted them to. Germany expanded by only half of the five percent she promised; for Japan the figure was barely five percent of the almost seven percent that was "planned."

The whole idea of economic targets is, of course, quite fallacious. Even assuming that the various nations wanted to monitor all economic information, the economy is far too complex for governments to keep such statistics. Much information is never even available—opportunity costs, for instance—and data which can be measured officially becomes available only long after anything can be done to affect them.

After a history of broken promises and unfulfilled expectations, the summiters, clearly humbled, met again in Bonn this past July. Only Japan and Canada sought to echo the discredited targetry by simply reaffirming their aims of a five percent growth in output. The Germans, however, visibly recoiled at the entire idea. Their promise to reflate by "up to" one percent of GNP was clearly not to American liking, even though four attempts were made by the drafters to make it look as bright as possible.

Even in areas where the participants announced a policy, the leitmotiv throughout was vagueness. So although Japan agreed to import more and hold down exports to last year's level, the wording—or lack of it—was cleverly chosen. The appreciating yen is already taking a competitive shine off Japanese exports (down five percent in June from year-earlier figures). But the price of Japanese goods in *dollars* is soaring (21 percent higher in June). Since the dollar price of Japanese imports is rising much less rapidly, the new pledge still enables Japan's dollar surplus to rise. Also left vague was the Japanese promise to double its foreign aid outlay in three years; the communique didn't specify whether aid was to be measured in rising yen or falling dollars. If the latter, Japanese aid might actually fall.

But vagueness was also the order of the day concerning the most pressing area of the Bonn summit. The other officials had long told Carter their wishes to see America's oil imports cut, because they believed this "payments deficit" to be the chief cause of the dollar's decline. Carter did not agree to this, persuading Chancellor Schmidt that any action to reduce imports (by quotas or taxes) would hinder his energy bill now in Congress. Schmidt was given to understand that Carter would act after the congressional elections.

Actually, all this skirts the real issue, and skirts it badly. First of all, if Carter wants to reduce America's "dependence" on foreign oil, he can do it in better ways than by imposing quotas and taxes to discourage oil use. He could work to deregulate completely the entire American oil industry, and make it profitable for companies to find and refine as much oil as possible. But even if this happened and we no longer needed imported oil at all, the dollar's ills would remain uncured. For the whole idea that balance of payments "deficits" cause the trouble needs to be attacked. Even more importantly, the whole idea of balance of payments "deficits" needs to be attacked.

If I am willing to trade my money for your magazine, no one speaks of a deficit. I value the journal more than the money; you value the money more than the journal. When we trade, we each get what we want. If this is true with the trades of each and every individual, it must be true with nations—collections of individuals. When Americans buy something that is produced elsewhere in greater abundance and at a lower price, they are merely re-enacting the same value preferences seen in the individual case. If the United States must import all of its Sung dynasty porcelain vases, because we can't produce our own, no one speaks of a "porcelain vase deficit." It would simply be a case of our exchanging money for those vases, which we either couldn't produce at all, or could produce only at a very high price. The money we pay for these goods is not depreciated because we buy them. Similarly, the American oil trade does not affect the foreign-exchange value of the dollar. The mere fact that a nation imports more than it exports does not betoken a stagnating economy: The United States "ran a trade deficit" throughout most of the 19th century, a period of perhaps the greatest economic expansion in the history of the world. What a country needs for economic growth are internal conditions to attract research and development of goods and services, and investment—foreign and domestic—in such goods and services. This means a minimum of taxes and regulations. It also means a money whose value will not depreciate. For the wild printing of dollars is the only cause of the dollar's decline. And governments are the only culprits.

Economic summits are meetings of buffoons mouthing platitudes that are not believed and making promises that are not kept. They are malevolent buffoons, too, continually raising the hope among the world's peoples that conditions will improve. But as with so many other sorts of government promises, fewer and fewer people are believing them.

That is as it should be. □

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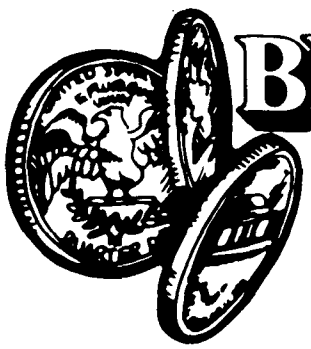

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Big Poison, Little Poison?

How much marijuana is contaminated with Paraquat? HENRY LOUIS seeks an answer.

The original story broke late in July: The National Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia had challenged the much-publicized statistics of the PharmChem Research Foundation on exactly how much Paraquat was getting into street marijuana in this country. PharmChem claimed that more than a third of the 15,000 marijuana samples tested in its Northern California lab were "positive"—that is, contained significant traces of the deadly herbicide. But the CDC claimed to have found Paraquat in only one in 40 of PharmChem's positive samples. Where was the truth? Was Uncle Sam poisoning his pot-smoking citizens in large numbers, or wasn't he?

That he was poisoning them in some numbers seemed plain enough. Since 1975, the U.S. government has been providing helicopters, advisors, and millions of dollars to spray marijuana fields in Mexico with the herbicide Paraquat—a chemical which, in small doses, may take years to affect those exposed to it, but which may ultimately kill them or leave them to live with irreversible lung damage. Small doses of Paraquat are almost certainly finding their way into the lungs of Americans who smoke Mexican grass. And enormous doses of it are coating the fields, homes, and livestock of uncounted Mexican peasants and their families—all courtesy of Uncle Sam. The question PharmChem and the CDC are trying to answer is: How small are the doses of Paraquat the U.S. government is spending so much to dispense to its citizens?

For libertarians, the issue was even larger: Was a state-financed, state-operated agency like CDC proving itself more accurate and reliable in practice than its free-market counterpart, PharmChem?

The black market in pleasure drugs, after all, operates in many ways like a free market. No government official tells the entrepreneur in dope where or during what hours he may conduct his business, who his customers may be, what quantities he may sell, or what prices he may charge. No government official tells him what he may say in his efforts to sell his product. And no government official offers legal recourse to his buyer if he sells it by fraud.

The buyer in this black market must be wary, and ever on the lookout for misrepresented goods. As in the ideal free market, he is on his own, dependent on his own expertise as a consumer, and on the goodwill of the entrepreneurs with whom he deals. And, as everyone who has traded in the dope market knows, such goodwill is not at all rare. Those in the retail marijuana and cocaine businesses have at least as much interest in developing regular, satisfied customers as do retail businessmen who deal in tobacco and spirits. Their suppliers, in turn, wish to develop long-range business relationships with both their customers and their own suppliers. Long-range relationships—not the sorts of short-range ones which lead to large, quick profits and even quicker, and more frequent, changes of address. PharmChem figures suggest that well over 90 percent of the marijuana sold on the street is exactly as represented, and that between 55 and 95 percent of the cocaine sold on the street is either exactly as represented or "cut" (adulterated) with the local anaesthetics (procaine, lidocaine, benozocaine) which street buyers commonly expect.

The PharmChem Research Foundation of Menlo Park, California, performs the same service for consumers in the dope market which is performed for consumers in the controlled market by the government: the service of testing retail drugs for purity. To find out more about PharmChem—how it works and how well it works—we paid a visit to its headquarters on the last day of July and talked with PharmChem's executive director, John Kotecki.

LR: What exactly is PharmChem?

Kotecki: The best way to answer that is to start at the beginning. The foundation got started in 1972, at about the time that Dr. James Ostrenga, who is president of the foundation, had opened PharmChem Laboratories to do nothing but urinanalysis testing—that is, they test urine for the presence of drugs. People were repeatedly coming to him and asking him to identify unidentified substan-

Henry Louis is a writer-producer for the Public Affairs Broadcast Group. His 30-minute documentary, "Libertarianism: A Movement of Individualists," has been heard on more than 150 radio stations throughout the United States.

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ces—street drugs. He was unable to do so, because his lab wasn't set up for that. His is a very specialized lab. Recognizing that demand or need, though, he decided to go ahead and start the PharmChem Research Foundation. And in 1972 we got going largely under his auspices. The foundation primarily tests street drugs; that is, we test an alleged unidentified or an alleged street drug for actual content. We then let the individual know, on an anonymous basis, what he has. On a monthly basis we reprint the results of the previous month's testing, and make that available to the public. And on a more immediate basis, we put out what is called the *Street Drug News,* which is a reprint of the previous week's local analysis. That goes out to the media. Typically it's carried by a number of local radio stations. It's educational; it lets the public know what drugs are being circulated. It allows us to pick out samples which are very dangerous or harmful, and warn people, alert them to the hazard. That basically is the function of the foundation: to let people know what's going on with drugs—their content—and to let them know what the hazards are, if any, of a given drug.

LESLEE NEWMAN

Marijuana is tested for Paraquat contamination at PharmChem.

LR: If someone has some marijuana which he fears is contaminated with Paraquat and he's in Duluth, Minnesota, what should he do?

Kotecki: The same thing he should do if he's in San Francisco or anywhere else. He should send us a minimum of one tablespoon of plant material along with $8 to cover the cost of analysis and a random five-digit number to identify his sample. We don't want his name or any other identification other than that number. Our service is called Analysis Anonymous. He should wait approximately ten days, then call us and give us his ID number, and we'll give him the results of the test.

LR: How many people avail themselves of your services?

Kotecki: Well, prior to Paraquat, it was about 300 people a month, on a pretty regular basis, with an average annual increase of about ten percent a year. Paraquat has been an exceptional experience. We've analyzed some 15,000 samples to date. It's just been a horrendous undertaking. We're now on the other side of that crisis and down to only about 30 or 40 samples a day coming in for Paraquat testing.

LR: The National Center for Disease Control has challenged your estimates of how much Paraquat is actually in street marijuana in the United States.

Kotecki: Well, it's not really a challenge. What happened was, when this thing first happened, when we first became aware of the Paraquat spraying program, the government took a very neutral or noncommital position, wouldn't go on record as to whether there was Paraquat marijuana going around. So PharmChem got involved in documenting that there was. We have since turned for supportive studies to local and state agencies and the federal government, and have largely gotten very noncommital, nonresponsive answers. We've even been unable to get the government to send us a sample of some marijuana sprayed with Paraquat or even just some Paraquat by itself, and we really need these samples in order to be certain about our own findings. One response we did get was some interest by the Center for Disease Control in trying to find out what the consequences had been for people who'd been smoking allegedly contaminated marijuana. They did a survey project here. They surveyed people on the phone who'd been smoking contaminated marijuana. They'd want to know: Did you notice a funny odor? Did you have trouble breathing? Was there dizziness or pain? That kind of thing. They also asked the people to resubmit their positive samples. If they'd sent us a marijuana sample that turned up contaminated, they'd say at the end of the interview, would you send us some more of the same batch? About 50 people took them up on that and resubmitted their samples. And then the Center for Disease Control announced that in analyzing the first 40, they only found one positive. Our first question is: Why didn't they find out what the problem was before they announced this? Maybe people actually sent in different batches, took a different batch of marijuana and said, well, I'll get it tested for free this time. A couple of people have admitted that they did just that. Our second question is whether there's a problem with CDC's testing methodology, which is, to our minds, a distinct possibility. They have unusual ways of doing things. For example, we use sulphuric acid to isolate the Paraquat from the plant material. A standard laboratory procedure. They have a sonic device that vibrates it out. But even when the methodology is standard, the interpretation of the result is subject to the human element, particularly when you talk about something like a court-ordered analysis, when a lot is hinging on the result.

So basically there's a discrepancy. We don't know why. We're trying to track it down. They've promised to send us some confirmed positive material to test *our* procedure with. I picked that sample up this morning.

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PharmChem carries out its Paraquat testing and other procedures in unpretentious storefront office space in an industrial park about 45 minutes south of downtown San Francisco. There's a small outer office, a private office for Kotecki, the lab itself, and a giant warehouse room where each day's mail is opened and sorted into two categories: marijuana for Paraquat testing, and everything else. The marijuana is soaked in sulphuric acid; the liquids and powders and pills and tabs of blotter paper are soaked in methyl alcohol. And the resulting extracts are subjected to a laboratory process called thin-layer chromatography. First, they're applied in small amounts to silica gel screening plates—glass plates coated with silica gel to a thickness of 250 micromillimeters (about one one-hundred-thousandth of an inch). Such plates turn white after being soaked in screening solvent and heat-dried in a laboratory oven. And each of the different chemicals—psychoactive or otherwise—that were part of the extracts originally applied to the plates stands out on the white background as a colored spot—a different color or a different position on the plate for each of 285 different substances.

Each analysis takes from four to six hours to run, and marijuana samples alone pour into the lab at the rate of between 30 and 40 submissions a day. Things are busy at PharmChem. So after observing and asking questions in the lab for a brief while, we returned to Kotecki's office for clarification of the exact nature of PharmChem's relation to the government.

According to Kotecki, there's been no effort by the Drug Enforcement Administration to trace the drug users and dealers who submit samples to PharmChem. And there have also been no public funds to aid research. As Kotecki puts it, "The government has given us no help and no trouble."

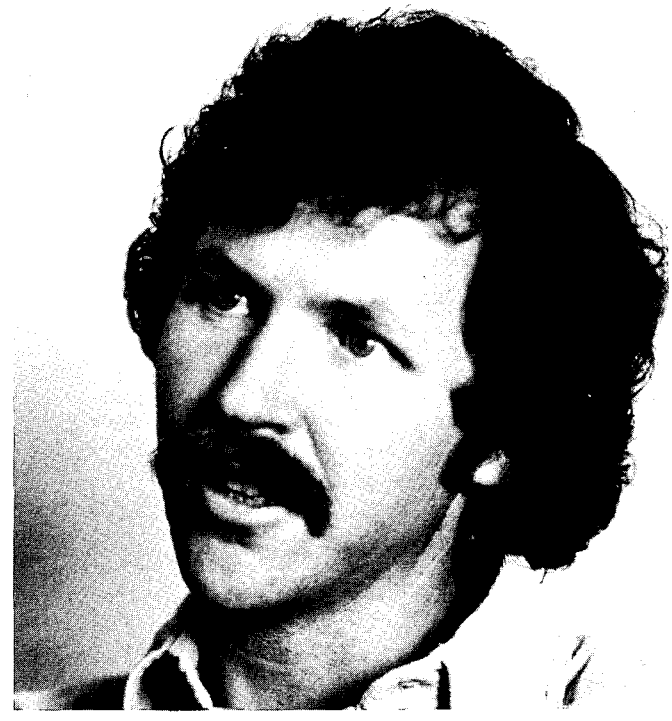
LR: So you protect your clients' anonymity with your random five digit numbers, even though the D.E.A. has made no effort to track any of them down.
Kotecki: We're licensed by the D.E.A. to receive samples of illegal drugs and to perform the analysis. Having that license is the extent of our relationship with the government. That's as much contact as we ever have.

LR: What's the exact relationship between PharmChem Research and PharmChem Laboratories?
Kotecki: They're a commercial, money-making endeavor, and happily, they do make money. So when we produce an annual deficit, as we normally do, usually Jim Ostrenga, who's the president of the foundation and also the head of the company, usually underwrites that deficit.

LR: And his lab does urinalysis?
Kotecki: Yes. For methadone maintenance programs, drug detoxification programs, therapeutic communities, drug treatment programs generally. The State of California parole and probation people are a big client.

LR: These are programs designed to make sure heroin users on methadone maintenance aren't backsliding and shooting up junk?
Kotecki: And also to make sure they *are* taking their methadone, and that they're not taking something else in addition. If someone on a methadone maintenance program comes up clean in a urinalysis, he's not taking his methadone. He may be selling it.

We shot a few more pictures and said goodbye to the folks at PharmChem. But we were destined to reestablish contact sooner than we'd expected. Four days later, PharmChem tested that contaminated marijuana returned the morning of our original interview by the Center for Disease Control. And the test revealed that PharmChem's testing methodology had been faulty. On August 7, PharmChem temporarily suspended its Paraquat testing program, pending identification of the flaw in the procedure and the culprit responsible. On August 9, Kotecki told San Francisco area radio and TV stations about the suspension. And on the morning of August 10, he talked with *LR* again about the implications of this new wrinkle in the developing Paraquat story.



John Kotecki

LR: What exactly have you discovered about the PharmChem testing methodology?
Kotecki: That it seems to have worked on the positive samples, but not on all of the negative ones. That is, all the marijuana we said was clean *was* clean. But some of the marijuana we said was contaminated was clean, too. We don't know why yet.

LR: Does this mean CDC's figures are correct and PharmChem's are incorrect? Was PharmChem error the cause of the discrepancy in the figures?
Kotecki: We don't think that's the whole story. We *do* have a problem at PharmChem, but that doesn't mean to us that everything is perfectly all right at CDC.

So at this juncture, it reamins unclear just how much of the poison Uncle Sam is deliberately dumping on Mexican (and, reportedly, Venezuelan) marijuana fields is reaching the lungs of American dope smokers. Only government labs and government-licensed labs may perform the needed analysis (as *LR* was going to press, a would-be free market rival in Louisiana was being threatened with massive fines for attempting to do the work without such a license), and both government and government licensee are now looking at the reliability of their testing procedures. And while they search for methodological errors, the spraying, and the poisoning, continue. *That* procedure is the greatest methodological error of all. □

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BOOKS AND THE ARTS

The epic archipelago: Gulag III

JOHN HOSPERS

The Gulag Archipelago, Volume 3, *by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Harper and Row, 558 pp., $17.*

WITH THE PUBlication of Volume III (Books 5-7), Solzhenitsyn's 2,000-page saga of the Soviet methods of arrest, interrogation, and punishment is now complete. "It is the epic of our times," wrote the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* after the first publication of the *Gulag* in Paris (in Russian). "An epic is the creation of an entire people written by one person who has the creative power and the genius to become the spokesman for his nation. And in this work, we hear a people speaking through the impassioned, intrepid, ironic, furious, lyrical, brutal, and often tender voice of the narrator."

Gulag I was on the best-seller lists in the United States for several months after its publication in English in 1974. It has been translated and is still being translated into many languages. The word "Gulag," an acronym of the Russian words referring to the Soviet penal system, has become international, known and recognized in most of the languages of the West. There are also far fewer apologists for the Soviet system today than there were even ten years ago; most of its former proponents have now denounced it or remain uncomfortably silent. Only a few die-hards like Lillian Hellman, who fought Nazism but has not recanted her Stalinism, and Angela Davis, who, when asked about the civil rights of Czech dissenters after the Soviet takeover in 1968, replied, "Let them rot in prison! They deserve it!" are left to defend the Soviet tyranny. That this is so is due largely to the monumental achievement of one man, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Solzhenitsyn is far from being the first person to call the West's attention to the nature of the Soviet penal system. Even in the 1930s, American engineers, lured by Soviet gold, went to Russia, saw aspects of the system at work, and wrote articles about it. Many witnessesed the forced collectivization of the kulaks — a village would be surrounded by barbed wire and machine guns, all the grain would be hauled out and none permitted in, and everyone inside would die of starvation. In that way Stalin got rid of more than five million of his alleged enemies. There were murmurs of dissent in the United States when America joined the U.S.S.R. in the war effort, but they were swept aside in the tide of Allied victory.

In 1948, Professor David Dallin's book *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia* was published by Yale University Press — a detailed and scholarly work, with interviews, maps, and data on the 127 known complexes of labor camps. In the face of a 50 percent annual mortality rate from cold, starvation, disease, and brutality, most of the victims never lived to tell the tale (including those who engineered the projects, who were shot on various pretexts before they could return to Moscow). There was an amnesty for Polish prisoners (in exchange for Allied favors) and hundreds of these prisoners testified, independently of each other, to the unspeakable brutality of life within the camps. But as painstaking and scholarly, even dramatic, as it was, the book caused scarcely a ripple, and many in America still agreed with Howard Fast that "a true brotherhood of man has emerged in the Soviet Union."

More and more evidence to the contrary continued to appear, however. There were numerous autobiographical accounts of experiences with Soviet methods of arrest, detention, and interrogation, some from ex-prisoners and some from defected Soviet officials; e.g., *I Was an NKVD Agent,* by Anatoly Granovsky; (1962); *Magadan,* by Michael Solomon (1971); *My Testimony,* by Anatoly Marchenko; *Alexander Dolgun's Story* (An American in the Gulag) (1975); Isaac Levine's *Eyewitness to History* (1971); *Inside the KGB,* by Alexei Myagkov (1978), and others. There were detailed accounts by outsiders collected from numerous sources, such as John Barron's *KGB* (1974); exposes of American-British collaboration in the forcible repatriation of Russian nationals to certain death in their "homeland" after World War II, such as Julius Epstein's *Operation Keelhaul* (1973); and equally detailed accounts of anti-Soviet Russian armies toward the end of World War II, such as Sven Steenberg's *Vlasov* and Huxley Blythe's *The East Came West.* In 1963 there appeared an intensely dramatic volume of true short stories about the slave camps in the Kolyma region of Siberia, *Gamalis and Other Stories,* by a former KGB official there, Vladimir Andreyev. And, of course, there were Solzhenitsyn's own novels, *The First Circle, Cancer Ward,* and *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* of which only the last-named was published in the Soviet Union, during the early days of the "Khrushchev thaw." Of all these, only Solzhenitsyn's novels made a dent in public opinion in the West prior to the appearance of the *Gulag.*

The most detailed and scholarly of all the works on the Soviet system is

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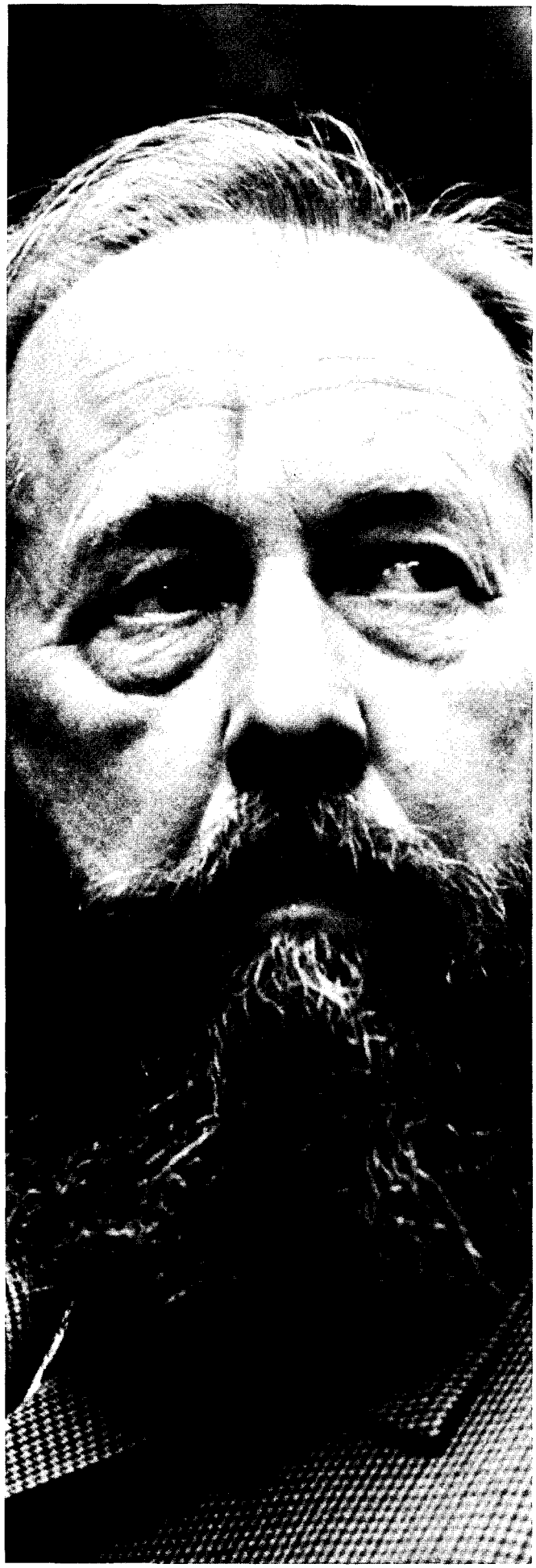
probably *The Great Terror* (1965) by the British poet-historian Robert Conquest. It describes in gruesome detail (and documents with almost a hundred pages of footnotes) the full horror of the Soviet tyranny under Stalin: the assassinations, the phony trials and executions, the slave labor camps. It is more than sufficiently researched to satisfy even the most skeptical historian. Some of the incidents it relates, such as the visit by Henry Wallace and Owen Lattimore to one of the worst of these camp complexes, Kolyma, and their praise of these camps (which admittedly had been "doctored up" for their visit), are so bizarre that but for the elaborate documentation few would have believed the accounts. (In a novel, they would have been put down as "too improbable.") Together these books provide a damning and decisive indictment of the multi-faceted Soviet tyranny. There is no longer any room for doubt. For those who are willing and able to read and investigate, the evidence is detailed and massive, and there is no longer any rational possibility of denying it. Within the last month Robert Conquest's new book, *Kolyma* (on the slave-system in the northeastern Siberian gold mines) has appeared to cap all the other accounts. Those who want to see totalitarianism in a favorable light must now turn to China, whose record (64 million deaths by Mao's own admission) is apparently even worse. Only in the groves of academe is it still fashionable to praise the tyranny in China and to consider Solzhenitsyn an embarrassment, or to act as if he had never existed.

What Solzhenitsyn's great non-fictional work adds to the accounts already written is primarily twofold: hundreds upon hundreds of incidents, eyewitness accounts of brutality and corruption, torture and killing, suffering and heroism, which do not appear (at least not these specific incidents) in other works; and the dramatic power of a great novelist, who is able not only to cite facts and statistics, but to bring home to the reader in the most powerful and often heart-rending way the full agony and heroism of the individual sufferers. It is his spell-binding narrative power that has captured the imagination of millions of readers round the world, and aroused at last the moral indignation of readers who had previously believed that the Nazi camps had been the ultimate in degradation and cruelty.



UPI

I reviewed the first volume of the *Gulag* in the September 1974 issue of *Libertarian Review*. But *Gulag II* was never reviewed in *LR*, so I shall combine some comments on this work with those on the newly published *Gulag III*.

While *Gulag I* was concerned with the processes of arrest, interrogation, torture, and trial in the Soviet penal system, *Gulag II* and *III* are concerned primarily with the "corrective labor camps" and, for those who survived these, the years of exile following upon the labor sentences. Here and there through the long narrative, Solzhenitsyn intersperses his own personal experiences. For he himself, a soldier in World War II, was arrested when a letter of his criticizing Stalin was read by Soviet officials, and he spent eight years in various labor camps, followed by years of exile in Kazakhstan which are described powerfully in *Gulag III*.

Throughout most of the

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Stalin period, beginning about 1928, the population of the slave labor camps averaged between 12 and 15 million people. In the early years, and again during World War II, the annual death rate averaged almost half. Prisoners who became sick from malnutrition, overwork, or exposure to cold (-70°F in some cases) had their rations cut — the state had no more use for them — and they simply died by the thousands.

One of the first large-scale Soviet projects was the building of the Belmoral Canal, from Leningrad to the White Sea. "Stalin simply needed a great construction project somewhere which would devour many working hands and many lives—the surplus of people as a result of the liquidation of the kulaks—with the reliability of a gas execution van but more cheaply . . . ." (*Gulag II,* 86) The engineers said, "We must make the structure of concrete." The Soviet government said: "There is not enough time." The engineers said: "We need large quantities of iron." The Soviet government said: "Replace it with wood." The engineers said: "We need tractors, cranes, machinery." The Soviet government said: "There can be none of that . . . do it all by hand." "The engineers were put to work making a plan before the surveys had been made on the ground," Solzhenitsyn writes. "Trainloads of prisoners arrived at the canal site before there were any barracks there, or supplies, or tools, or a plan; it was already autumn. There were no drafting papers, no rulers, no thumbtacks, no light in the work barracks." From camps in central Asia, they brought tribesmen of minority groups (whom Stalin would eliminate after he had used up their labor) into the subzero cold. The normal day's task was to break up two-and-a-half cubic yards of granite and move it a hundred yards in a wheelbarrow. And the snow kept falling and covering everything up:

> The ugly depression, powdered over with snow, was full of people and stones. They bent over, two or three of them together and taking hold of a boulder, tried to lift it. The boulder did not move. They called a fourth and fifth. But at this point the technology of our glorious century came to their aid: they dragged the boulder out of the excavation with a net—the net being hauled by a cable, and the cable in turn by a drum turned by a horse. And they used wooden cranes for lifting stones . . . .
>
> They were hurled from the 20th century into the age of the caveman . . . . And how were trees to be felled if there were neither saws nor axes? Ropes were tied around the trees, and they were rocked back and forth by brigades (of slaves) pulling in different directions—they rocked the trees out. After all, the canal was being built on the initiative and instructions of Comrade Stalin! This was written in the newspapers and repeated on the radio every day . . . . No, it would be unjust, to compare this most savage construction project of the 20th century, this canal built with wheelbarrow and pick, with the Egyptian pyramids; after all, the pyramids were built with contemporary technology! And we used the technology of 40 centuries earlier! . . . . Make use of the technology of the caveman, but bear the responsibility according to the rules of the 20th century: if it leaks anywhere, "off with your head!" And thousands of engineers were purged who were just doing the best they could. (II, 89)

The canal was at last completed. And more than 100,000 prisoners perished in the building of it. But this is far from the worst Solzenhenitsyn describes: "In the goldfields of northeast Siberia, they sent out 500 people to drive prospecting shafts to a depth of 25 to 30 feet in the permafrost. They completed them. Half the prisoners died before this had been done. It was time to start blasting, but they changed their minds: the metal content was low. They abandoned it. Next May the prospecting shafts thawed, and all the work was lost. And two years later, again in March, in the Kolyma frosts, they had another brainstorm: to drive prospecting shafts! in the very same place! urgently! don't spare lives!" (II, 585).

Solzhenitsyn devotes an entire chapter to the large experimental camp in the 1920s in the Solovetsky Islands near Murmansk; people there were used as guinea pigs to test exposure to cold and impossible conditions of labor, and the cells in the disbanded monasteries in these islands were used as dungeons and torture-chambers. These experiments set the pattern for the hundreds of camps that spread out like sores all over the face of Russia during the 1930s. The horrifying drama of these experiments with human lives, which gradually spread out over the whole five thousand miles east to Kamchatka, is dramatically recounted in *Gulag II* and *III*. Most of this material is unrelievedly depressing, and cannot be read in long stretches, but its cumulative effect is shattering.

The resultant morality

More gripping even than the description of conditions in the labor camps is the effect on the morality, not only of the inmates, but of the entire civilian population of the U.S.S.R. With the KGB able to act with virtually total autonomy, everyone is at the mercy of this organization, whose employees receive several times the wages of the highest paid workers in Russia; it is as if the criminals and murderers of a nation were to be released from the prisons and left to do as they liked with the nonprison population. The wicked prosper. The one who denounces another for not listening to a speech by Stalin is the one who wins, never the one who is denounced (who is shot or sent to 25 years in a labor camp—a sentence which few survive). Absolute secrecy even among intimates is essential: Many men owe their lives to not telling even their wives or mothers about their ideas, since in a domestic quarrel the wife could always report it and have the husband sent to Siberia, while she occupies his house. Betrayal becomes, in this horribly inverted moral scheme, the only way to survive.

> The mildest and most widespread form of betrayal was not to do anything bad directly, just not to notice the doomed person next to one, not to help him, to turn away one's face, to shrink back. They had arrested a neighbor, your comrade at work, or your close friend; you sit in silence. You acted as if you had not noticed. After all, you could not afford to lose your job! And then it was announced at work, at a general meeting, that the person, who had disappeared the day before, was an inveterate enemy of the people. And you, who had bent your back beside him for 20 years at the same desk, now by your noble silence, or even your condemning speech, had to show how hostile you were to his crimes. You had to make this sacrifice for the sake of your own dear family, for your own dear ones! what right had you not to think about THEM? But the person arrested had left behind him a wife, a mother, children, perhaps at least

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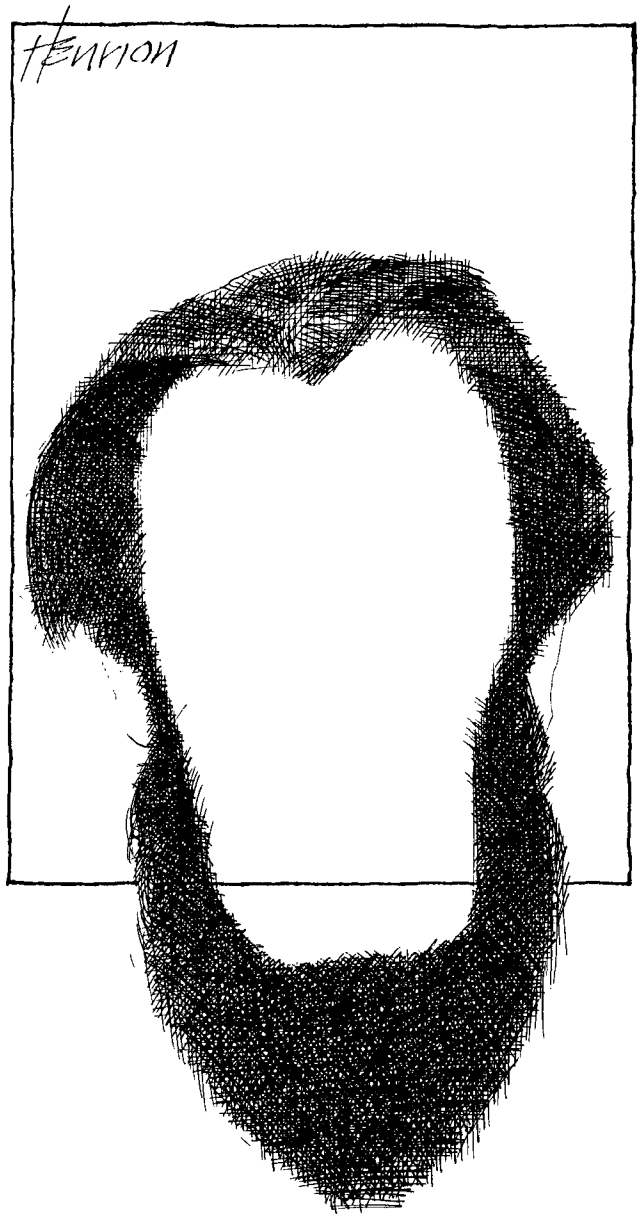
these ought to be helped? No, no, that would be dangerous; after all, these were the wife of an "enemy" and the mother of an "enemy", and the children of an "enemy"—and your own children had a long education ahead of them!" (II, 737)

A mother and little children were being taken to the railroad station by the police to be sent into exile. "All of a sudden, when they went through the station, the small boy, aged 8, disappeared. The policemen wore themselves out looking for him but couldn't find him. So they exiled the family without the boy. And what had happened was that he dived under the red cloth wound around the high pedestal beneath the bust of Stalin, and he sat there till the danger passed. And then he returned home—where the apartment was sealed shut. He went to neighbors, and to friends of his parents; no one took him in, they refused even to let him spend the night! And so he turned himself in at an orphanage." (II, 678)

The *permanent lie* becomes the only safe form of existence. Every wag of the tongue can be overheard by someone; every facial expression observed by someone. "A shake of the head instead of a nod might cost you resettlement in the archipelago . . . . [And] your children were growing up. If they weren't old enough, you and your wife had to avoid saying openly in front of them what you really thought; after all, they were being brought up in the schools to . . . . betray their own parents . . . . And if the children were too little, then you had to decide what was the best way to bring them up: whether to start them off on lies instead of the truth—so that it would be easier for them to live—and then to lie forevermore in front of them too; *or* to tell them the truth, with the risk that they might sometime make a slip, that they might let it out, which meant that you had to instill into them from the start that the truth was murderous, that beyond the threshold of the house you had to lie, only to lie, just like their father and mother." (II, 646)



Alexandr Solzhenitsyn

Children, of course, are taken away from their parents at any time the state chooses, particularly if they are accused of being dissenters or religious believers. The children are then brought up in state orphanages; they never see their parents again; they are taught the official doctrine, and are required to denounce their parents and call them traitors.

There are children in the labor camps also; Article 12 of the Criminal Code permits children from the age of 12 to be sentenced. Forty-eight percent of the prisoners in the labor camps were (and are, according to Solzhenitsyn, as of 1966) under 24 years old. They are often the strongest workers, able to last longest under impossible conditions of cold and overwork and exposure, and when large contingents of labor are needed at a certain place, vast numbers of juveniles are arrested ("Just give us the person, we'll invent the crime") and sent there. A boy of 12 was sentenced to death for getting drunk and taking a ride around the block on an officer's horse. A group of juveniles was given 25-year sentences in the Gulag for putting objects on railroad tracks. When mistakes were made in farm or factory from carelessness—that is, unintentionally—their makers were given the full sentence. When a 13-year-old, having worked on the state farm the entire day, took some wheat from alongside the road for the use of his own family, he was caught and sentenced to 25 years for stealing state property. Children who filled their pockets with potatoes from the state farm, to keep themselves from being hungry, were given eight years. (II, 450). The children who ran away from Factory Apprenticeship Training were sentenced, too: They were assigned to dump the excrement from the latrines. The children were hitched up like horses to carts containing barrels of this sludge, and the guards urged them on with clubs.

The children of the parents who had gone before usually ended up in prisons or in labor camps themselves, later on. "There was an eighth grade girl, Nina. They came to arrest her father in November 1941. There was a search. Suddenly she remembered that inside the stove lay a crumpled but not yet burned humorous rhyme. She decided she must tear it up at once. She reached into the firebox; but the dozing policeman grabbed her. And here was the sacrilege she had written:

The stars in heaven
are shining down
And their light falls
on the dew.

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Smolensk is already
lost and gone
And we're going to
lose Moscow too.

And of course these full-grown men engaged in saving their Motherland had to stop such dangerous thoughts." She was arrested and sentenced to eight years—first in prison, and then in a labor camp. But she survived. Her father was sent to a different camp, of course. They never sent members of a family to the same camp. You didn't last long in Russia in a logging camp; it's the same as a sentence of death. The work norms at these camps were totally impossible to fulfill, no matter how strong you were or how hard you worked, and if you didn't fulfill, the whole work-brigade was punished by receiving even less bread and gruel than the starvation rations they'd had before. Sixteen hours of work a day, plus a three mile walk to the forest and three miles back. Of course the camp administration was merciful: The work day was shorter when the temperature was lower than 60 below zero. But then the work had to be made up later. Anyway, there were hundreds who simply froze to death on such days; and the ones who were left couldn't walk any longer, and were straining every sinew to crawl along on all fours on the way back to camp (to get their pitiful cupful of gruel). These the convoy simply shot. And that is why the little girl's father died a few months after he was sentenced to a logging camp.

But for those found guilty of article 58—that is, political crimes—no minimum age existed: In Lithuania there were six-year-old children taken from their parents (II, 463) and sent to the labor camp. The offense? Writing a paper in school in defense of the independence of Lithuania. And in the course of the liquidation of the kulaks, thousands of little children, after their parents were shot or deported to the camps, were simply thrown out to die. And millions upon millions of children were and are orphaned by the arrest of their parents.

Here is [a little girl] Galya. She remembers very well her sixth birthday in 1933. The family celebrated it joyfully. The next morning she woke up. Her father and mother were gone, strangers were in the house. Her father had been taken out and shot. Her mother had been taken to prison; there she died a month later. The girl was taken to an orphanage in a monastery near Tobolsk. Conditions there were such that the young girls lived in constant fear of violence . . . . The director [of the orphanage] talked to her: "You are the children of enemies of the people, and nonetheless you are being clothed and fed!" . . . Galya became like a wolf cub. At the age of 11 she was already given her first political interrogation. Being of independent mind, she got a ten-year sentence. She actually managed to survive it. Today in her 40s, she lives a lonely life in a town far up in the Arctic, and she writes, "My life came to an end with my father's arrest. I love him so much to this very day that I am afraid to even think about it. My heart is sick with love for him. [The day they took him away] they took all our things out into the street and sat me there on top of them, and a heavy rain was falling. I have been sick at heart every day since then. From the age of six I have been daughter of 'a traitor to the Motherland.' " (II, 464)

But most of the children who were sent to the labor camps did not turn out even so happily as this. What do you expect would happen to them in the dog-eat-dog conditions of the camp, where stealing was required for the barest survival? Solzhenitsyn writes:

Out in freedom they had understood very well that life was built upon injustice. But out there some of it was dressed up in decent clothing, and some of it was softened by a mother's kind word. In the Archipelago the children saw the world as it is seen by animals: only might makes right! only the beast of prey has the right to live! . . . . Children accepted the Archipelago with the divine impressionability of childhood. And in a few DAYS children became beasts there—the worst kind of beasts, with no ethical concepts whatever . . . . The child masters the truth: if other teeth are weaker than your own, then tear the piece (of bread) away from them. It belongs to you! . . . Well what could you expect? No child could avoid being cooked in this mash. No child could remain a separate individual—he would be trampled, torn apart, if he didn't steal and maim to survive. (And imagine your own child in this place!) (II, 452)

The mess hall at this camp was a plank lean-to not adequate for the Siberian winter. The gruel and the bread ration had to be carried about 150 yards in the cold from the kitchen to the dugout. For the elderly this was a dangerous and difficult operation. They pushed their bread ration far down inside their shirt and gripped their mess tin with freezing hands. But suddenly, with diabolical speed, two or three children would attack from the side. They knocked one old man to the ground, six hands frisked him over, and they made off like a whirlwind. His bread ration (10 oz. a day) had been pilfered, his gruel spilled, his empty mess tin lay there on the ground, and the old man struggled to get to his knees . . . . And the weaker the victim the more merciless were the children. They openly tore the bread ration from the hands of a very weak old man. The old man wept and implored them to give it back to him: "I'm dying of starvation," he said. "So you're going to die soon anyway—what's the difference?" And the children went on, attacking the sick: the gang (of children) would hurl their victim to the ground, sit on his hands, his legs, and his head, take his food and what clothing they wanted [until the guards, after they'd stopped being amused, came at them with clubs]. (II, 458)

The children's chief weapon became the slingshot: that is, the index and middle fingers of the hand parted in a "V" sign—like butting horns. But they were not for butting. They were for gouging. They were always aimed at the eyes. Among the children this became a favorite dangerous game: all of a sudden like a snake's head a "slingshot" arises out of nowhere in front of an old man's eyes, and the fingers move steadily toward the eyes. The old man recoils. He is pushed in the chest, and another child has already knelt on the ground behind his legs; and the old man falls backwards, his head banging on the ground, accompanied by the laughter of the children." (II, 462)

And there was retaliation against the children, too. One man Solzhenitsyn describes worked out a method for getting rid of some of them in secret: "He would creep up on a child, hurl him to the ground and press down on the boy's chest with his knees until he could hear the ribs crack—but he didn't break them. He would let the child up at that point. The child wouldn't survive long, and there wasn't a physician who could diagnose what was wrong with him. And in this way the man sent several children to the next world before they themselves ganged up on him and beat him to death."

Attempts at escape

The first hundred pages or so of *Gulag III* show signs of being written in haste; the narrative is sometimes jerky and discontinuous. (*Gulag II* is, by all odds, the best of the three.) The author himself apologizes for this in an Afterword: "Never once

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did this whole book, in all its parts, lie on the same desk at the same time. In September 1965, when work on the Archipelago was at its most intensive, I suffered a setback: my archive was raided and my novel [*The First Circle*] impounded. At this point the parts of the Archipelago already written, and the materials for the other parts, were scattered, and never reassembled." (III, 526-7)

But for those readers who found *I* and *II* continuously depressing, *III* presents, much of the time, a considerable contrast, largely because of its subject matter. Much of *Gulag III* deals with escape attempts; and even though almost all attempts at escape were unsuccessful, and the escapers knew that the chances of bringing it off were thousands to one, the reader identifies with their heroism in the face of great odds. I did not think that any story of escape attempts could possibly match the powerful tale of attempted escape from the Kolyma, in the opening story of Andreyev's *Gamalis;* but the story of Georgi Tenno in Chapter 7 of Book 5 (*Gulag III*) matches it. All of them would make stunning movies, but it is very unlikely that any films will ever be made from these true stories.

Solzhenitsyn's tales of individual valor are sometimes interspersed with comments of his own—a habit which some readers may find irritating. Yet they add a kind of cosmic dimension to the narrative. In one tale of escape through the deserts near the Aral Sea, the prisoners go more than a week without water, until they find and kill a horse and drink directly from its wounds—at which point Solzhenitsyn remarks, "Partisans of peace! That very year you were loudly in session in Vienna or Stockholm, and sipping cocktails through straws. Did it occur to you that compatriots of the versifier Tikhonov and the journalist Ehrenburg were sucking the blood of dead horses? Did they explain to you in their speeches that that was the meaning of peace, Soviet style?" (*III,* 195)

And when he has described the brutal torture of one prisoner, a pacifist, Solzhenitsyn remarks, "Had he been brought into the world by the State? Why, then, had the State usurped the right to decide how this man should live?" And then he adds, "We don't mind having a fellow countryman called Leo Tolstoy. It's a good trademark. It even makes a good postage stamp. Foreigners can be taken on trips to Yasnaya Polyana. We are always ready to drool over his opposition to Tsarism and his excommunication (the announcer's voice will tremble at this point). But, my dear countrymen, if someone takes Tolstoy seriously, if a real live Tolstoyan springs up among us—look out! Don't fall under our caterpillar tracks!" (*III,* 110)

Very little has been written about exiled populations. Banishment under the Soviets was not as in Czarist days, to Irkutsk, with all one's wealth intact. "These peasants . . . were banished . . . not to a center of population, a place made habitable, but to the haunt of wild beasts, into the wilderness . . . . Even in their primeval state our forbears at least chose places near water for their settlements . . . but for special settlements [the Soviet authorities] chose places on stony hillsides—100 meters up above the river Pinega, where it was impossible to dig down to water, and nothing would grow in the soil. Three or four kilometers off there might be convenient water meadows—but no, according to instructions no one was supposed to settle there . . ."

Seventy thousand people were driven through Tomsk and "from there were driven farther, at first on foot, down the Tom although it was winter, then along the Ob, then upstream along the Vasyugan—still over the ice. The inhabitants of villages on the route were ordered out afterward to pick up the bodies . . . . In the upper reaches of the Vasyugan and the Tara they were marooned on patches of firm ground in the marshes. No food or tools were left for them. The roads were impassable, and there was no way through to the world outside, except for two brushwood paths, one toward Tobolsk and one toward the Ob. Machine-gunners manned barriers on both paths and let no one through from the death camp . . . . Desperate people came out to the barriers begging to be let through, and were shot on the spot . . . . They died off—every one of them." (*III,* 363)

Almost half the populations of Latvia, Lithuania, and Esthonia were exiled in this way (*III,* 390-5), and the only reason they did not all die within the year was that parcels of food and supplies were permitted from their native lands. The exiled populations from other areas, with no one left back home to send them anything, fared differently—they were totally destroyed.

The final impact

It is quite clear throughout this immense work that it was intended not primarily for the West, but for readers inside the Soviet Union; it is his own countrymen that he wants to awaken to an awareness of these evils and a public renunciation of them. But the *Gulag* has never been permitted publication in the Soviet Union; until it is, Solzhenitsyn considers his main purpose in writing it to remain unachieved.

Yet the publication of *Gulag* in the West has changed history. John Lukacs, in his book *1945: Year Zero,* writes (quoted by George Will in *Newsweek,* June 12, 1978, p. 112):

> Something happened in 1945, in a most unlikely place: in the pine forests of East Prussia . . . under the cap of a Soviet captain, into the gray fur of which the metallic red star was deeply impressed. A cold, crystalline thought which eventually led this man far, far enough to reject the entire mental system of the world in which he was born and in which he lived, to the point where the very rulers of that enormous empire began to worry about him and to fear him, while to many millions of other people he became that new thing, a Light from the East. Truly a single event in a single mind may change the world. It may even bring about—and not merely hasten—the collapse of the Communist system which is inevitable, though only in the long run. If so, the most important event in 1945 may not have been the division of Europe, and not the dawn of the atomic age, but the sudden opening and the sudden dawning of something in the mind of a ragged Soviet officer, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

The greatest significance of this work of Solzhenitsyn is that it presents to the world, more vividly and more ruthlessly than any work ever written, the final consequences of collectivism in practice. The excuse given for the camps, and for the entire Soviet penal system, is contained in the manual of instructions to trainees in the

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KGB: "You must think of humanity—past, present, and future—as one great body that requires surgery. You cannot perform surgery without severing membranes, destroying tissue, spilling blood. Similarly, in intelligence we sometimes destroy individuals who are expendable tissues in the body of humanity. Occasionally we must perform unpleasant acts, even kidnapping and liquidation. But none of this is immoral. All acts that further socialism are moral acts." (John Barron, *KGB*, p. 366)

The definitive comment on this was made by Ayn Rand, in her essay on the consequences of the idea that "each of us is a part, who lives only to serve the whole"—if not in the present, then for the sake of some glorious future ("Collectivized Ethics," *The Virtue of Selfishness,* p. 84): "The waiting has no end. The unborn profiteers of that wholesale sacrificial slaughter will never be born. The sacrificial animals will merely breed new hordes of sacrificial animals—while the unfocused eyes of a collectivized brain will stare on, undeterred, and speak of his vision of service to mankind, mixing interchangeably the corpses of the present with the ghosts of the future, but seeing no *men.*"

The long dark night of the Russian people has not yet ended. Khrushchev's exposés of the Stalinist atrocities resulted in a diminution of the number of people "chewed up" (Solzhenitsyn's term) by the "Soviet justice system." But to this day the torture chambers and the camps continue, easier than before on the thieves and murderers sent there but harder on the Section 58s (political prisoners)—Solzhenitsyn describes it in his penultimate chapter, "Rulers Change, the Archipelago Remains." Even now more revelations appear: Early in 1978, converging evidence from various sources came to light concerning Wrangel Island, 100 miles north of Siberia in the Arctic Ocean. There, a complex of three extermination camps has been operating for years, with human experiments on cold survival, pain tolerance, and disease inoculation. The horror continues. Now in exile in the United States, Solzhenitsyn too would have been chewed up by the system but for his fame in the outside world; a man possessed, he continues to write, hoping to live until the day he may return to a saner Russia. Until the horror is over and the guilty exposed, he will have no rest. Nor, for that matter, should we. □

John Hospers is professor of philosophy at the University of Southern California, and a frequent contributor to LR.

Marvelous charts, monstrous theories

CHRISTOPHER WEBER

The Golden Constant, *by Roy Jastram. John Wiley and Sons, 229 pp; $9.95*

IN *THE GOLDEN CONSTANT,* Dr. Roy Jastram of UC Berkeley has given us one of the most unusual books to emerge recently from the economics establishment. In effect, if not in intention, Jastram's work makes a terrific, sweeping statistical case for the gold standard.

The Golden Constant is subtitled "The English and American Experience, 1560-1976." "Experience" here means *price* experience. What Jastram has done is to painstakingly gather and compile a history of both English gold prices and English commodity prices over the past four centuries. He does the same with American prices from 1800 onward. His is an original, long-term wholesale price index, made possible by England's unique position among nations: For centuries England has had the same territory, has been free from invasion, and has kept the pound as her national money. The institutions whose centuries-old account books Jastram works with are often of a respectable character indeed: Westminster Abbey, Eton College, and Chelsea Hospital all had to buy wheat, bricks, cheese and cloth. And as for the price of gold, the English mint has continuous records dating back to 1343. For the past two centuries, with only short breaks, Jastram uses the London Market price—which is, of course, the most accurate price of all. Putting the two series together, Jastram then derives an index of gold's purchasing power over the centuries. He does the same for the American price experience, certainly an easier job with a young country. But the British results, with their longer sweep, are more useful. He uses 1930 as the base year, which equals 100. (1930 was the last year in which the Keynesian doctrine of inflationism was still not official British policy.)

The salient fact that emerges from the charts is this: Prices doubled between 1585 and 1718. Then they remained roughly stable for the next two hundred years, until 1930. Since that time, prices have rocketed to the stars, soaring an incredible 1,434 per cent!

The American record has been similar, only less drastic. Our wholesale commodity index was, by this reckoning, 100 in 1804; it was 100 in 1930. As recently as 1940, it was 90.8. Then, a five-fold climb begins: 185.7 in 1948; 247.5 in 1970; and 410 in 1976, the year the calculations end. This is an almost 500 per cent jump.

One question leaps out at us after observing this centuries-long record. We must ask ourselves why two centuries, from 1718 to 1914, had price stability, with no inflation, an experience so unlike the few decades since then. (I have not included the years 1914-1930 in the "stable" period, for there was massive government intervention in prices during World War I and its aftermath.)

Why this stability? It was because the gold standard triumphed during both these centuries, the eighteenth and the nineteenth. It conspicuously did *not* in the centuries before and since. By "gold standard" I mean the idea that paper currency only represents a specific quantity of gold, that it has no value of its own, and, further, that this gold value cannot be changed by the whims of either kings or government central banks.

Gold and silver had circulated as money for centuries before 1718. But during earlier times, bullion coins were regarded as creatures of kings. The gold guinea, for example, was arbitrarily fixed at 20 shillings, but the marketplace valued it more highly. Kings kept shifting the "official" value up and down. They also clipped and shaved down the gold content of the coins for extra income, thus debasing the money. In short, they paid no respect to the weights of gold which the coins were supposed to represent. Until the eighteenth century, almost

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everyone believed that coinage was a prerogative of the king, who could do with it as he pleased.

John Locke changed all that. We know him today as a great libertarian political philosopher, but he was very interested in questions of monetary economics as well. Widely respected for his brilliance, he was called in by the Lord Keeper (the treasurer) during the 1690s, when debasement was wreaking havoc with the English monetary system. Once again, there was talk of devaluation; of reducing the bullion content of the pound. Against this popular sentiment, Locke wrote the essay, "Further Considerations Concerning Raising the Value of Money." While writing this, he was in frequent association with Sir Issac Newton, who was Master of the Mint at that time. We know that the great mathematician agreed with the great philosopher; however, only Locke's views have come down to us. Locke railed against the further debasement in the name of justice: The lessening of the coin's bullion content would "without any reason, deprive great numbers of blameless men of a fifth of their estates beyond the relief of chancery."

Locke then put forward the simple and radical view that the only true pound was a fixed and immutable weight of bullion, and that none could change this value, not even the king himself. This view prevailed over those of the bankers, goldsmiths, and businessmen. Thus, on December 12, 1717, Master of the Mint Issac Newton placed the pound, in effect if not by outright proclamation, on a gold standard of 3 pounds, 17 shillings, and 10.5 pence per standard ounce of gold.

The doctrines of reason and liberty had translated themselves into a hard money policy which in time brought stability to the world. Another type of thinking would prevail two centuries later and money would once more be subject to changeable whim. We are now feeling the effects of this shift backward to pre-Enlightenment thought.

It is in Jastram's discussion of the rise of the sound money philosophy in England, as well as in his statistical data, that the strength of *The Golden Constant* lies. Unfortunately, Jastram does not favor the gold standard. He foresees "a further moving of gold out of the monetary systems of the world." And while he acknowledges that gold worked undeniably well for centuries, times have changed, he says, and nations won't return to gold just because of the "nostalgia, romanticism, and wishful thinking" of some. Why does Jastram misinterpret his own informative data and implicitly accept the notion that gold is finished and inflation will be with us forever?

He even makes the extraordinary statement that "gold is a poor hedge against major inflation," and statistically "proves" that gold's purchasing power lags behind commodity price rises during inflations, although it catches up in times of deflation. Here, of course, he is proceeding from the conventional and mistaken premise that economic theories (his own or anyone else's) can be "tested" or "proved" by statistics or historical fact. All sorts of factors contribute to the making of an historical fact. One must be aware of many causal factors in order to understand why prices did what they did during a certain time period. For example, Jastram points to the historical fact that from 1933 to 1976, British commodity prices rose more than 1400 per cent, and yet gold lost 25 per cent of its purchasing power during this time. Strangely, he doesn't mention here that gold from 1933 to 1971 was subject to a stringent government price control: There was an official government price of $35 an ounce throughout this 40-year period. Just in the past few years, since the market has begun to reassert itself, this price control has been

Roy Jastram

smashed and gold's price has soared. And because of that large rise (which some hold has not yet ended), while the purchasing power of British currency has fallen by more than 1400 per cent, gold's has fallen by only 25 per cent. If this statistical survey had been made 10 years ago, when gold was still controlled at $35, bullion would have shown the same 1400 per cent fall. Only now, with the barriers down, is this artificial gap being erased.

Still more strangely, when Jastram *does* mention government attempts to control gold's price, he refers to them astonishingly, as "heroic measures" to keep gold "stable." And all the while, the governments in question were inflating wildly. Further in this vein, he lauds the formation of the London Gold Pool, which, beginning in 1961, sought to seal off official gold whenever the market price began to act up. Pro-gold France was the first to withdraw from the Pool, in 1967, and Jastram calls the antimarket efforts of the remaining nations "valiant." Those efforts collapsed a year later—unfortunately so, to Jastram's way of thinking. In the decade since then, gold's price has quintupled. But this book was written in mid-1977, and gold at that time, after having exploded from $35 to almost $200 an ounce, had fallen back to $120 briefly, then had stayed at around $140 for a long while. This was an expected price correction, and considering the heights to which it had risen, not a very severe one. Jastram, however, proclaims that "since 1975 the price of gold has fallen drastically." He implies that gold is back to her "pattern" of falling during inflation. Nonsense. This was a natural and temporary phenomenon. At this writing, gold prices have set new records, more than $200 an ounce.

Finally, Jastram overlooks a starkly simple fact. In all his talk about gold being a bad inflation hedge, he forgets the great lessons of his own charts: When paper money is backed by gold, no one needs an inflation hedge. There is no inflation.

Fortunately, however, the essence of Jastram's book is not his economic or political analysis. It is rather those wonderful charts of his, which deserve to be pored over by everyone concerned with inflation. □

Christopher Weber writes frequently on economic and financial matters for LR and a number of other publications.

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The therapy is the message

SHARON PRESLEY

Psychobabble: Fast Talk and Quick Cure in the Era of Feeling, *by R.D. Rosen. Atheneum, 233 pp., $8.95.*

ARE YOU TIRED OF "getting your act together"? Do you recoil from "getting in touch with yourself"? Do you have a fervent desire to stuff large objects down the throats of those who admonish you to "do your own thing"? Perhaps you're just "bummed out" and need more "space" to be in. Or maybe you're just part of a growing trickle bucking the swelling flood of psychobabble precipitated by the psychological self-liberation movement.

As anyone who has been awake the last few years must surely be aware, psychological self-liberation, or the Human Potential Movement as it is sometimes called, is *very* in. Self-liberation is commercially hotter than Davy Crockett, the Beatles, and Colonel Sanders put together. *How to Be Your Own Best Friend, Looking Out for #1, How to Be Awake and Alive, It's Me and I'm Here* — the list rolls on and on. As Tom Wolfe has so wryly observed, this is "the Me Decade."

Libertarians—as part of the well-educated middle class which forms the bulk of the devotees of the Human Potential Movement—have not been immune to the siren call either:

- A libertarian candidate for mayor in a major city spouts est jargon instead of libertarian rhetoric; he is but one of a growing number of libertarians who have "gotten It" through est.
- A libertarian financial advisor drops out to study meditation.
- A stalwart of a local Libertarian Party practices astrology as an aid to self-liberation.

The backlash was inevitable: Tom Wolfe's *The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening; The New Narcissism* by Peter Marin; *The Serial,* a wicked satire on life in that fountainhead of psychobabble, Marin County; and, inevitably, a TV special on disillusionment with the Human Potential Movement, filmed in—where else?—Marin County.

Joining the ranks of the skeptics is R.D. Rosen, who, with perceptive eye and witty tongue, deftly dissects some of the excesses of the psychological self-liberation movement in his latest book *Psychobabble:* "Please! one wants to cry—no more books by unhappy housewives crying, 'I've just got to be me!' No more female ad agency executives telling me how they make men want to get into their pants at singles bars! No more divorced men screaming for justice! No more daydreams of Great Danes with searching tongues! Enough!"

Psychobabble—Rosen's term for the substitution of facile psychological jargon for meaningful and precise language to describe one's inner mental states—is, he contends, rampant in the self-liberation movement. It has even insinuated itself into the contemporary American consciousness, and at a high price. "The prevalence of psychobabble," says Rosen, "signifies more than a mere 'loss for words.' One never loses just words . . . and so psychobabble represents a loss of understanding and the freedom that accompanies understanding as well."

Language, as Rosen sees it, is the best access we have to the meanings of our feelings. But "language frozen in the Lucite of ready-made concepts" conceals these feelings rather than allowing their expression. As an alternative to psychobabble, Rosen calls for a "language that has better access to the paradoxes of emotional life and therefore a language that is more revealing, more powerful, more therapeutic."

Rosen guides the reader through the dense jungle of psychobabble currently blossoming forth from six popular therapies—David Viscott, est, co-counseling, computer therapy(!), Rebirthing, and Primal therapy. Examining the jargon and methods used in these therapies, and the experiences of the people involved in them, Rosen effectively shows the simple-mindedness and anti-rationality of their approaches. Looking for a quick cure, a single cause, they eschew the patient analysis and hard work necessary for a real understanding of personal problems, and settle instead for the Alka-Seltzer approach. Plop-plop-fizz-fizz, oh, what a relief it is, and all in one easy swallow.

R.D. Rosen

Dunk yourself in a tub of warm, salty water and "re-experience" your birth. Presto—panacea. Get down to the "primal" level of your being and scream your guts out. Bingo—instant cure. But, as Rosen points out, any real and durable self-improvement "must engage the rational, conceptualizing faculties to recall and reintegrate . . . memories and feelings from all periods of one's life." To take the emotional experience peddled by Rebirthing or Primal therapy as the *whole* process, rather than simply part of a carefully developed, multilayered investigation of one's psyche is, in Rosen's opinion, "to believe that to make an omelette, one need *only* crack eggs."

Then there is est with its goal of "getting It" (whatever "It" is). "You can't put it together . . . It's already together," says Werner Erhard, founder of est. "Thinking won't get you there . . . ." Est is, according to Rosen, not just "your standard nickle-dime psychobabble" but a "Classic Comics" version of some of the great psychological and philosophical traditions, the "clear chicken broth" of therapies.

David Viscott, on the other hand, might be called the McDonald's of psychotherapy. Churning out not only book after book but also greeting card after greeting card, Viscott, according to Rosen, reminds people of the same obvious points over and over and over again. "This is a

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remarkable thing about American self-help books in general," says Rosen. "Each seems to be the same roll of Life Savers, only with the colors arranged in a different order."

But it is not just simple-mindedness that makes psychobabble so dangerous. Running throughout the therapies Rosen discusses are two common threads: authoritarianism and abdication of personal responsibility. They "all help make human growth into something of a game. Doing so may increase a therapy's effectiveness in the short run, but the danger is that in playing by someone else's rules . . . one forfeits the chance to gain any independence—including independence from therapy—in the long run . . . . At work is a very subtle totalitarianism whose therapeutic benefits are received at the cost of relinquishing one's ability to develop more independent judgments about oneself."

"Primal therapy," for example, "claims to be anti-authoritarian but by being anti-intellectual about psychology, it is tyrannical on an emotional level." Scorning rational analysis, Primal therapy makes "having a primal" the all-consuming goal, the only way to get to the root of one's problems.

Co-counseling claims to advocate taking responsibility; but, in the words of one disillusioned woman, it "bestows on you a halo of goodness, so nothing's your fault . . . Co-counseling is heavily into not criticizing—it normally assumes a problem is not your fault, but the result of someone else's distress pattern."

Rosen intentionally does not offer a radical new proposal, but he does suggest that therapeutic methods should entail an emphasis on rationality, psychological responsibility and a precise use of language. Unfortunately, this sensible proposal is marred by the implication that psychoanalysis, updated and revamped through ideas like those expressed in Roy Schafer's *A New Language for Psychoanalysis* (which Rosen discusses at length) can provide an alternative. While Schafer's methods, as outlined by Rosen, are thoughtful, and would certainly improve psychoanalysis, that alone is not enough. The basic assumptions of psychoanalysis are what need to be questioned—something Rosen doesn't do. Effective examination of one's psyche doesn't require the often destructive intellectual baggage of Freudianism, no matter how updated.

But Rosen's affinity for psychoanalysis is a minor flaw. In providing a highly readable warning against the misuse of psychological language, he has done skeptics and believers alike a great service. Skeptics, of course, will find *Psychobabble* delightful reading. But even those who don't agree with all his criticism can profit from the book's most important lesson—not that one should avoid particular therapies like est or Primal but that one should always be critical, even skeptical, in judging them. Even Rosen admits that some people find these therapies useful. But no therapy, whether dubious or reasonable, should be a substitute for patient, careful self-examination. Not as much fun as screaming or being screamed at, no doubt, but considerably more effective in the long run. □

Sharon Presley holds an M.A. in psychology and is currently completing work on her Ph.D. in social psychology at the City University of New York.

Of life and literature and liberty

G.E.B. CHARING

On Moral Fiction, *by John Gardner. Basic Books, 214 pp., $8.95.*

The World Within the Word, *by William H. Gass. Alfred A. Knopf, 341 pp., $10.*

IN JOHN GARDNER'S view, "We are living, for all practical purposes, in an age of mediocre art." And nowhere is this more evident, Gardner feels, than in the field of fiction:

> When one talks with editors of serious fiction, they all sound the same: they speak of their pleasure and satisfaction in their work, but more often than not the editor cannot think, under the moment's pressure, of a single contemporary writer he really enjoys reading. Some deny, even publicly, that any first-rate American novelists now exist. The ordinary reader has been saying that for years. Critics may still be enthusiastic—discovering new writers or discovering new depths in our established writers—but critics aren't exactly disinterested. Never judge the age of a horse by the smile of the farmer.

But how then shall we judge the horse's age, the fiction's value? "The first business of criticism," Gardner writes, "should be to judge works of literature (or painting or even music) on grounds of the production's moral worth." A work of art is good, says Gardner, "only when it has a clear positive moral effect, presenting valid models for imitation, eternal verities worth keeping in mind, and a benevolent vision."

"Wherever possible," says Gardner, "moral art holds up models of decent behavior; for example, characters in fiction, drama, and film whose basic goodness and struggle against confusion, error, and evil—in themselves and in others—give firm intellectual and emotional support to our own struggle. A brilliantly imagined novel about a rapist or murderer . . . has obvious value and may even be beautiful in its execution, but it is only in a marginal sense art." "Life's imitation of art is direct," adds Gardner, "and not necessarily intelligent. After Marlon Brando appeared in *On the Waterfront,* an entire generation took to slumping, mumbling, turning up its collar, and hanging its cigarette casually off the lip. After the appearance of Roy Rogers, hordes of twelve-year-olds took to squinting."

But is it really necessary to point out that this is precisely the view of art held by the advocates of bowdlerization and cen-

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sorship? For if life does imitate art, they argue, mustn't we see to it that no art depicting rape or murder or drug use or crimes against nature is displayed or published, lest we find more rapists, murderers, drug addicts, and criminals against nature among us?

Gardner does not argue in this way, to be sure, but it is nevertheless useful to note the fundamental similarity of his argument to that of the puritan, because the answer to both is the same: Life *does* imitate art, but not in so crude and unimaginative a way.

Oscar Wilde, who first announced that life imitates art, understood this issue perfectly. "Where, if not from the Impressionists," he demands in his essay "The Decay of Lying" (1891),

> do we get those wonderful brown fogs that come creeping down our streets, blurring the gas lamps and changing the houses into monstrous shadows? To whom, if not to them and their master, do we owe the lovely silver mists that brood over our river, and turn to faint forms of fading grace curved bridge and swaying barge? . . . For what is Nature? Nature is no great mother who has borne us. She is our creation. It is in our brain that she quickens to life . . . What we see and how we see it depends on the Arts that have influenced us.

Herbert Read made the same point more than fifty years later, when he spoke of the arts as offering "*aesthetic* education — the education of those senses upon which consciousness, and ultimately the intelligence and judgment of the human individual, are based." So did Ayn Rand less than a decade ago, when she spoke of art as telling man "in effect, which aspects of his experience are to be regarded as essential, significant, important. In this sense art teaches man how to use his consciousness. It conditions or stylizes man's consciousness by conveying to him a certain way of looking at existence."

And each writer, of course, tells a different story about which aspects of experience are to be regarded as essential, significant, important. Each writer embodies in his work a different way of looking at existence. And reading a great many novels and stories by a great many diverse writers is therefore rather like gazing out at the world through diverse pairs of eyes, filtered by diverse experiences and prejudices. It is like learning first hand, in detail, and hundreds of times over, what it is really like to be somebody else. Ultimately, it is this process (whether applied to fiction, film, theater, or even television) by which each of us gropes her way to his own unique "way of looking at existence."

This is how life imitates art. We watch Roy Rogers on TV and learn from it, not that we should squint or chase "outlaws" on horseback, but that to some eyes life is an ongoing battle between good and evil. We read a novel like James M. Cain's recently reissued *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and learn from it, not that we should murder for profit, but that to some eyes life is a meaningless series of grimly ironic chance encounters. We read a novel like Samuel R. Delany's *Dhalgren* (1975) and learn from it, not that rape is admirable and worthy of worship, but that to some eyes life is a waking dream in which violence, sex, and ritual are inextricably intertwined. The puritans have never been able to produce a single sex criminal who committed his crime in exact mimicry of a "Pornographic" novel, and John Gardner would be similarly unable, I suspect, to produce a single human being of any kind who had been led to become a moral human being by imitating a character in a novel. We go to art, not for particular models of behavior, but for general modes of awareness.

Samuel R. Delany's name is nowhere to be found in this book which pompously and fatuously declares that no first-rate American novelists now exist. Neither does it contain a single reference to Gene Wolfe, whose most recent novels, *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* (1972) and *Peace* (1975), are fit to stand beside anything in American literature. Nor does it contain a single reference to Wilfrid Sheed or to Ursula K. LeGuin or to Eve Babitz or to Joanna Russ or to Joan Samson or to Phillip K. Dick or to William Kotzwinkle or to Ken Kesey or to the late Edgar Pangborn. And the references to J.D. Salinger, to Donald Barthelme, and to William H. Gass are not, as one might reasonably expect, laudatory. Salinger's is, Gardner suspects, "an inflated reputation." Barthelme, "even at his best, as in *The Dead Father* . . . goes not for the profound but for the clever." Gass is "stubbornly unreadable," a writer who, "after working for a while within fiction's old conventions, has broken the rules, quit the game like a sorehead, when he's the only pitcher we've got."

But wait a minute. Let's run that last objection by one more time: *after working for a while within fiction's old conventions, he has broken the rules.* And suddenly what began as an indictment of "immoral" fiction has become a slap on the wrist for fiction that does not follow "the rules." Or has any transformation actually taken place? Aren't the two positions the same at bottom?

Consider, since Gardner raises it, the case of William H. Gass. His only novel, *Omensetter's Luck* (1966), is one of the finest things in the language — as are his only story collection, *In the Heart of the Heart of the Country* (1968), and his two previous volumes of essays, *Fiction and the Figures of Life* (1969) and *On Being Blue* (1976). *Omensetter's Luck* escapes being the greatest American novel of the 1960s only by the coincidence of Nabokov's *Pale Fire* also being published during that incredible decade. At 54, in midcareer, Gass is in a position rather similar to that of James Branch Cabell during the 1920s. He already is probably as famous as he is ever going to be, and as widely and intelligently read. But the recognition has come too late. The years of rejection, neglect, and incomprehension have left him bitter, rancorous, cynical. Now, he is painfully aware, his books are most admired among those graduate students in English he once dismissed as would-be philosophers who lacked the intellectual rigor for true philosophy.

Himself a professor of philosophy, he is little enough read or understood among his colleagues. For the philosophers, he's too much the poet; for the poets, too much, too relentlessly, rigorously, uncomfortably, the philosopher. Yet, like Cabell's 50 years ago, his books are faithfully reviewed, reprinted, even done obeisance to. "The thinness of his argument notwithstanding," his reviewers chant, "what language! What sentences! To read them is to walk at leisure down an elegantly, elaborately laid out pathway, while all around one, from every direction, metaphors are bursting into life like fireworks which fall to

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earth as living flowers—a pathway through a garden so fecund that to tarry is to take root oneself and leave!"

They're right about the language, of course, but not about the "thinness of the argument." It's not thin at all, but fleshy, redolent and resonant as the prose it's swathed in. Once upon a time, it used to go by the name of "art for art's sake," perhaps a misleading name for the doctrine that art, for both creator and contemplator is properly an end in itself, not a means to some other end, such as truth, morality, or patriotism.

Curiously enough, under the name "art for art's sake," this doctrine has found spokesmen among the same writers who were invoked earlier to refute John Gardner's view of how life imitates art. "Of wisdom," wrote Walter Pater in his conclusion to *The Renaissance* (1873), "the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake." Pater's chief disciple, Oscar Wilde,—who in 1890 called *The Renaissance* "the holy writ of beauty" — declared further, in his 1891 preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* that "no artist has ethical sympathies" and "no artist desires to prove anything," and went on to say in his courtroom testimony in 1895 that "no work of art ever puts forward views; views belong to people who are not artists."

For Ayn Rand, writing in 1965, "one of the distinguishing characteristics of a work of art (including literature) is that it serves no practical, material end, but is an end in itself; it serves no purpose other than contemplation." And for William Gass in 1978, "the responsibility of any science, any pure pursuit, is ultimately to itself, and on this point physics, philosophy, and poetry unite with Satan in their determination not to serve."

There'a a touch, not only of aestheticism, but also of libertarianism in the way Gass puts that; and this is no accident. Like most creative artists, Gass has a strong streak of anti-authoritarian individualism running through his thinking. And it crops up even in apolitical books like *The World Within the Word.* His suspiciousness about the authoritarianism of psychoanalysis, for example, leads him to write (in "The Anatomy of Mind," his masterly and encyclopedic essay on Freud) that

> the therapeutic success of psychoanalysis has been dubious; its empirical base remains weak; its testability is nearly nil; its openness to quantification, despite Freud's early predilections, is precisely that of the latched lid. In addition, it has remained suspiciously tied to its founders, and has shattered like a clumsy beaker into faddy camps of every conceivable Californucopial kind, rival schools whose appearance could have been anticipated if Freudianism had been perceived as a philosophical or religious undertaking instead of a scientific one.

Politics he lumps with "witchcraft, astrology and diets" as an illusory and pernicious means of achieving order.

And in this latter view, Gass has much literary company, especially—and by no mere coincidence—among art-for-art's-sakers and those who believe art presents, not particular models of behaviour, but particular ways of apprehending the world. Oscar Wilde and Herbert Read were anarchists. Ayn Rand, though she rejects the label, is a limited government libertarian.

That's how the sides line up. John Gardner and the puritans on one side, saying that art is the maidservant of morality, that it must set a good example, that it must follow certain rules. "Art is in one sense fascistic," says Gardner in so many words. "It claims, on good authority, that some things are healthy for individuals and society and some things are not."

On the other side, in an emphatically nonunanimous and not infrequently uneasy alliance, are Pater, Wilde, Read, Rand, and Gass, saying that art is no one's maidservant; it urges no ideas, sets no examples, but simply is; it need follow only one rule—to be true to the unique vision which created it. True art is libertarian. It thrives, as does society, on diversity.

As Herbert Read pointed out four decades ago, "the problem of good and bad art, of a right and wrong system of education, of a just and unjust social structure, is in the end one and the same problem." And the solution is liberty, not a "morality" characterized by rules and fascism. To John Gardner's assertion that "moral art and moral criticism are necessary and, in a democracy, essential," there is but one reply — the reply directed by H. L. Mencken against the literary establishment of his day in the opening lines of his 1927 essay on James Branch Cabell:

> What ails American literature, fundamentally, is what ails the whole of American culture, politely so-called: a delusion of moral duty. It comes down to us, I daresay, from the Puritans who hunted clams and salvation along the miserable New England coast; it remains the chief pox of this great and puissant land to the present day. □

G.E.B. Charing is the author of "Unfinished Essays."

She covers the waterfront

JUSTIN RAIMONDO

Metropolitan Life, *by Fran Lebowitz. E.P. Dutton, 177 pp., $8.50.*

THE METEORIC SUCcess of Fran Lebowitz is a wonderful thing to behold. God knows we have all watched the rise of leisure suits, est, and *People* magazine in recent years with Spenglerian despair. In the face of all this, any sign of life, metropolitan or otherwise, is a welcome respite.

For years, Fran's column "I Cover the Waterfront" was the only conceivable excuse for purchasing a copy of *Andy Warhol's Interview* (a tabloid concerned chiefly with the determinedly languid activities of the leisure class). With Algeresque tenacity, little Fran—who had always stood out from the rest of the glitterati like real cashmere in a roomful of Dacron—was soon turning out "The Lebowitz Report" for *Mademoiselle* every month.

The essays in this book—taken largely from her *Interview* columns—are more than merely funny (after all, even Idi Amin is funny, provided you aren't one of his subjects). No, it isn't enough to be merely funny anymore. In a world positively awash with persons who have just discovered the word "relationship" and those who insist on the word "chairperson," one has to be merciless, brutal, ever-vigilant, without becoming pedantic, longwinded, or otherwise unamusing. And whatever *Metropolitan Life* is, it isn't longwinded. In fact, it's so slender as to appear neurasthenic. That, alas, is the price one

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pays—$8.50 for a short look through the eyes of a dangerously perceptive woman, a woman who feels, for example, that the chief drawback of democracy is "its regrettable tendency to encourage people in the belief that all men are created equal. And although the vast majority need only take a quick look around the room to see that this is hardly the case, a great many remain utterly convinced."

"The common good is not my cup of tea," Fran writes. "It is the uncommon good in which I am interested." "Throughout history," she says, "people have exhibited an unfortunate tendency to band together in groups." "My political position is based largely on my aversion to large groups."

Fran Lebowitz

It also seems to have been based in part on childhood experience. Consider this anecdote:

> My attendance at grammar school coincided rather unappealingly with the height of the cold war. This resulted in my spending a portion of each day sitting cross-legged, head in lap, either alone under my desk or, more sociably, against the wall in the corridor. When not so occupied I could be found sitting in class reading avidly about the horrors of life under Communism. I was not a slow child, but I believed passionately that Communists were a race of horned men who divided their time equally between the burning of Nancy Drew books and the devising of a plan of nuclear attack that would land the largest and most lethal bomb squarely upon the third grade class of Thomas Jefferson School in Morristown, New Jersey.

"The vast majority of us were rather right-wing all through grammar school," Fran writes. "Upon reaching adolescence, however, a number of us rebelled and I must admit to distinctly leftist leanings during my teen years. Little by little, though, I have been coming around to my former way of thinking and, while I am not all that enamored of our local form of government, I have reacquired a marked distaste for Theirs." "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," says Fran, "is not a decision I care to leave to politicians."

All, of course, is not political. There are also sections on Manners, Science, Arts and Letters. And there are even indications that Fran's political views are based on certain of her nonpolitical views. "That I am totally devoid of sympathy for, or interest in, the world of groups," she says, "is directly attributable to the fact that *my* two greatest needs and desires—smoking cigarettes and plotting revenge—are basically solitary pursuits."

One suspects that Fran finds politics inherently unamusing. One suspects her of operating at an entirely different, deeper level. Although I'm sure she would be shocked—nay, *bored*—by the suggestion, I intend to risk everything by calling her a moralist who is also an essayist, and her book, *Metropolitan Life*, a brilliantly sustained attack on every current absurdity, from egalitarianism to conceptual art. If you can imagine Dominique Francon as a Jewish girl from Morristown, New Jersey, then you're probably the kind of person who will make this book a cult classic. ☐

Justin Raimondo is an *LR* staff member.

Public Trough

(Continued from page 6)

was previously believed. And Feldstein, who is president of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), has done many studies on the need to achieve a higher level of saving in this country if we are to have a high level of economic growth. He has also documented biases in the tax code which encourage consumption and discourage saving.

The new economists are also concerned about those biases against their ideas which are built into government programs through the use of large-scale econometric models. These models are used by all government agencies and the Congress to predict the results of various fiscal programs. Since they are virtually all based on Keynesian principles, they consistently support Keynesian programs with their data. For example, the Data Resources, Inc. model once showed that if the corporate tax rate were cut gross national product would fall! This problem is now being alleviated by the construction of new models which will take into account the supply effects of fiscal policies, rather than just the demand effects. The leader in this effort is Dr. Norman Ture of Washington, former tax policy specialist for the NBER and chief economist of the House Ways and Means Committee. He will soon be joined, however, by Chase Econometrics, headed by Dr. Michael Evans. That firm recently received a contract from the Senate Finance Committee to construct a model which will have greater sensitivity to the revenue feedback effects of various tax cuts. (Senator Russell Long, chairman of the committee, has long attacked the Treasury Department for its inability to determine with any accuracy the actual revenue gain or loss from various tax measures.) Dr. Arthur Laffer of the University of Southern California is also known to be working on a new model, under the auspices of the American Council for Capital Formation and the H.C. Wainwright Company.

In terms of legislation, the new economists are very close to victory in two areas: the Kemp-Roth Tax Reduction Act, which would slash all marginal tax rates by about one third, and the Steiger Amendment, which would cut the maximum tax rate on capital gains from 50 percent to 25 percent. Although these measures may not pass in their present form, there is no doubt that they are only the first guns of a counterrevolution in fiscal policy which will continue into the future as the new economists increase their ranks and their output. ☐

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